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RUDYARD KIPLING

VOLUME II

SOLDIERS THREE
AND MILITARY
TALES 卐 卐 PART I

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THE WRITINGS IN PROSE AND VERSE OF

RUDYARD KIPLING

SOLDIERS THREE
AND MULVANEY TALES

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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MULVANEY, ORTHERIS, AND LEAROYD

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THE WRITINGS IN PROSE AND VERSE OF

RUDYARD KIPLING

SOLDIERS THREE
AND MILITARY TALES

PART I.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1899

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SOLDIERS THREE AND MILITARY TALES

PART I

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SOLDIERS THREE

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

An' when the war began, we chased the bold Afghan,
An' we made the bloomin' Ghazi for to flee, boys O!
An' we marched into *Kabul*, an' we tuk the Balar 'Issar
An' we taught 'em to respec' the British Soldier.

Barrack Room Ballad.

MULVANEY, Ortheris and Learoyd are Privates in B Company of a Line Regiment, and personal friends of mine. Collectively I think, but am not certain, they are the worst men in the regiment so far as genial blackguardism goes.

They told me this story in the Umballa Refreshment Room while we were waiting for an up-train. I supplied the beer. The tale was cheap at a gallon and a half.

All men know Lord Benira Trig. He is a Duke, or an Earl, or something unofficial; also a Peer; also a Globe-trotter. On all three counts, as Ortheris says, "'e didn't deserve no consideration." He was out in India for three months

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collecting materials for a book on "Our Eastern Impedimenta," and quartering himself upon everybody, like a Cossack in evening dress.

His particular vice—because he was a Radical, men said—was having garrisons turned out for his inspection. He would then dine with the Officer Commanding, and insult him, across the Mess table, about the appearance of the troops. That was Benira's way.

He turned out troops once too often. He came to Helanthami Cantonment on a Tuesday. He wished to go shopping in the bazars on Wednesday, and he "desired" the troops to be turned out on a Thursday. *On—a—Thursday.* The Officer Commanding could not well refuse; for Benira was a Lord. There was an indignation-meeting of subalterns in the Mess Room, to call the Colonel pet names.

"But the rale dimonstrashin," said Mulvaney, "was in B Comp'ny barrick; we three headin' it."

Mulvaney climbed on to the refreshment-bar, settled himself comfortably by the beer, and went on, "Whin the row was at uts foinest an' B Comp'ny was fur goin' out to murther this man Thrigg on the p'rade-groun', Learoyd here takes up his helmut an' sez—fwhat was ut ye said?"

"Ah said," said Learoyd, "gie us t' brass. Tak oop a subscripshun, lads, for to put off t' p'rade, an' if t' p'rade's not put off, ah'll gie t' brass back

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agean. Thot's wot ah said. All B Coomp'ny knawed me. Ah took oop a big subscripshun — fower rupees eight annas 'twas — an' ah went oot to turn t' job over. Mulvaney an' Orth'ris coom with me."

"We three raises the Divil in couples gin'rally," explained Mulvaney.

Here Ortheris interrupted. "'Ave you read the papers?" said he.

"Sometimes," I said.

"We 'ad read the papers, an' we put hup a faked decoity, a — a sedukshun."

"*Ab*dukshin, ye cockney," said Mulvaney.

"*Ab*dukshun or *se*dukshun — no great odds. Any'ow, we arranged to taik an' put Mister Benhira out o' the way till Thursday was hover, or 'e too busy to rux 'isself about p'raids. *Hi* was the man wot said, 'We'll make a few rupees off o' the business.'"

"We hild a Council av War," continued Mulvaney, "walkin' roun' by the Artill'ry Lines. I was Prisidint, Learoyd was Minister av Finance, an' little Orth'ris here was ——"

"A bloomin' Bismarck! *Hi* made the 'ole show pay."

"This interferin' bit av a Benira man," said Mulvaney, "did the thrick for us himself; for, on me sowl, we hadn't a notion av what was to come afther the next minut. He was shoppin' in the bazar on fut. 'Twas dhrawin' dusk thin, an' we

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stud watchin' the little man hoppin' in an' out av the shops, thryin' to injuce the naygurs to *mallum* his *bat*. Prisintly, he sthrols up, his arrums full av thruck, an' he sez in a consiquinshal way, shticking out his little belly, 'Me good men,' sez he, 'have ye seen the Kernel's b'roosh?'—'B'roosh?' says Learoyd. 'There's no b'roosh here—nobbut a *bekka*.'—'Fwhat's that?' sez Thrigg. Learoyd shows him wan down the sthreet, an' he sez, 'How thruly Orientil! I will ride on a *bekka*.' I saw thin that our Rigimintal Saint was for givin' Thrigg over to us neck an' brisket. I purshued a *bekka*, an' I sez to the dhriver-divil, I sez, 'Ye black limb, there's a Sahib comin' for this *bekka*. He wants to go *jildi* to the Padsahi Jhil'—'twas about tu moiles away—'to shoot snipe—*chirria*. You dhrive *Jehannum ke marfik, mallum*—like Hell? 'Tis no manner av use *bukkin'* to the Sahib, bekaze he doesn't *samjao* your talk. Av he *bolos* anything, just you *choop* and *chel*. *Dekker?* Go *arsty* for the first *arder*-mile from cantonmints. Thin *chel, Shaitan ke marfik*, an' the *chooper* you *choops* an' the *jildier* you *chels* the better *kooshy* will that Sahib be; an' here's a rupee for ye.'

"The *bekka*-man knew there was somethin' out av the common in the air. He grinned an' sez, '*Bote achee!* I goin' damn fast.' I prayed that the Kernel's b'roosh wudn't arrive till me darlin' Benira by the grace av God was undher weigh.

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The little man puts his thruck into the *bekka* an' scuttles in like a fat guinea-pig; niver offerin' us the price av a dhrink for our services in helpin' him home. 'He's off to the Padsahi Jhil,' sez I to the others."

Ortheris took up the tale.

"Jist then, little Buldoo kim up, 'oo was the son of one of the Artillery grooms — 'e would 'ave made a 'evinly newspaper-boy in London, bein' sharp an' fly to all manner o' games. 'E 'ad bin watchin' us puttin' Mister Benhira into 'is temporary baroush, an' 'e sez, 'What *'ave* you been a doin' of, Sahibs?' sez 'e. Learoyd 'e caught 'im by the ear an 'e sez — "

"Ah says," went on Learoyd, "'Young mon, that mon's gooin' to have t' goons out o' Thursday — to-morrow — an thot's more work for you, young mon. Now, sitha, tak' a *tat* an' a *lookri*, an' ride tha domdest to t' Padsahi Jhil. Cotch thot there *bekka*, and tell t' driver in your lingo thot you've coom to tak' his place. T' Sahib doesn't speak t' *bat*, an' he's a little mon. Drive t' *bekka* into t' Padsahi Jhil into t' watter. Leave t' Sahib theer an' roon hoam; an' here's a rupee for tha.'"

Then Mulvaney and Ortheris spoke together in alternate fragments: Mulvaney leading [You must pick out the two speakers as best you can]: —"He was a knowin' little divil was Bhuldoo,— 'e sez *bote achee* an' cuts — wid a wink in his oi

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—but *Hi* sez there's money to be made—an' I wanted to see the ind av the campaign—so *Hi* says we'll double hout to the Padsahi Jhil—an' save the little man from bein' dacoited by the murtherin' Bhuldoo—an' turn hup like reskooers in a Vic'oria Melodrama—so we doubled for the *jhil*, an' prisintly there was the divil av a hurroosh behind us an' three bhoys on grasscuts' ponies come by, poundin' along for the dear life—s'elp me Bob, hif Buldoo 'adn't raised a rig'lar *harmy* of decoits—to do the job in shtile. An' we ran, an' they ran, shplittin' with laughin', till we gets near the *jhil*—and 'ears sounds of distress floatin' molloncolly on the hevenin' hair." [Ortheris was growing poetical under the influence of the beer. The duet recommenced: Mulvaney leading again.]

"Thin we heard Bhuldoo, the dacoit, shoutin' to the *bekka* man, an' wan of the young divils brought his stick down on the top av the *bekka*-cover, an' Benira Thrigg[illegible]e howled 'Murther an' Death.' Bhuldoo ta[illegible] the reins and dhrives like mad for the *jhil*, havin' dishpersed the *bekka*-dhriver—'oo come up to us an' 'e sez, sez 'e, 'That Sahib's nigh mad with funk! Wot devil's work 'ave you led me into?'—'Hall right,' sez we, 'you catch that there pony an' come along. This Sahib's been decoited, an' we're goin' to resky 'im!' Says the driver, 'Decoits! Wot decoits? That's Buldoo the *budmash*'—'Bhuldoo be shot!'

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sez we. "'Tis a woild dissolute Pathan frum the hills. There's about eight av thim coercin' the Sahib. You remimbir that an' you'll get another rupee!' Thin we heard the *whop-whop-whop* av the *bekka* turnin' over, an' a splash av water, an' the voice av Benira Thrigg callin' upon God to forgive his sins—an' Buldoo an' 'is friends squotterin' in the water like boys in the Serpentine."

Here the Three Musketeers retired simultaneously into the beer.

"Well? What came next?" said I.

"Fwhat nex'?" answered Mulvaney, wiping his mouth. "Wud ye let three bould sodger-bhoys lave the ornamint av the House av Lords to be dhrowned an' dacoited in a *jhil?* We formed line av quarther-column an' we discinded upon the inimy. For the better part av tin minutes you could not hear yerself spake. The *tattoo* was screamin' in chune wid Benira Thrigg an' Bhuldoo's army, an' the shticks was whistlin' roun' the *bekka*, an' Orth'ris was beatin' the *bekka*-cover wid his fistes, an' Learoyd yellin', 'Look out for their knives!' an' me cuttin' into the dark, right an' lef', dishpersin' army corps av Pathans. Holy Mother av Moses! 'twas more disp'rit than Ahmid Kheyl wid Maiwund thrown in. Afther a while Bhuldoo an' his bhoys flees. Have ye iver seen a rale live Lord thryin' to hide his nobility undher a fut an' a half av brown swamp-wather? 'Tis the

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livin' image av a water-carrier's goatskin wid the shivers. It tuk toime to pershuade me frind Benira he was not disimbowilled: an' more toime to get out the *bekka*. The dhriver come up afther the battle, swearin' he tuk a hand in repulsin' the inimy. Benira was sick wid the fear. We escorted him back, very slow, to cantonmints, for that an' the chill to soak into him. It suk! Glory be to the Rigimintal Saint, but it suk to the marrow av Lord Benira Thrigg!"

Here Ortheris, slowly, with immense pride—"'E sez, 'You har my noble preservers,' sez 'e. 'You har a *b*onour to the British Harmy,' sez 'e. With that he describes the hawful band of decoits wot set on 'im. There was about forty of 'em, an' 'e was hoverpowered by numbers, so 'e was; but 'e never lorst 'is presence of mind, so 'e didn't. 'E guv the *bekka*-driver five rupees for 'is noble assistance, an' 'e said 'e would see to us after 'e 'ad spoken to the Kernul. For we was a *b*onour to the Regiment, we was."

"An' we three," said Mulvaney, with a seraphic smile, "have dhrawn the par-ti-cu-lar attinshin av Bobs Bahadur more than wanst. But he's a rale good little man, is Bobs. Go on, Orth'ris, my son."

"Then we leaves 'im at the Kernul's 'ouse, werry sick, an' we cuts hover to B Comp'ny barrick, an' we sez we 'ave saved Benhira from a

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bloody doom, an' the chances was agin there bein' p'raid on Thursday. About ten minutes later come three envelicks, one for each of us. S'elp me Bob, if the old bloke 'adn't guv us a fiver apiece — sixty-four rupees in the bazar! On Thursday 'e was in 'orspital recoverin' from 'is sanguinary encounter with a gang of Pathans, an' B Comp'ny was drinkin' 'emselves into Clink by squads. So there never was no Thursday p'raid. But the Kernul, when 'e 'eard of our galliant conduct, 'e sez, 'Hi know there's been some devilry somewheres,' sez 'e, 'but I can't bring it 'ome to you three.'"

"An' my privit imprisshin is," said Mulvaney, getting off the bar and turning his glass upside down, "that, av they had known, they wudn't have brought ut home. 'Tis flyin' in the face, firstly av Nature, secon' av the Rig'lations, an' third the will av Terence Mulvaney, to hold p'rades av Thursdays."

"Good, ma son!" said Learoyd; "but, young mon, what's t' notebook for?"

"Let be," said Mulvaney; "this time next month we're in the *Sherapis*. 'Tis immortial fame the gentleman's goin' to give us. But kape it dhark till we're out av the range av me little frind Bobs Bahadur."

And I have obeyed Mulvaney's order.

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THE TAKING OF LUNGTUNGPEN

So we loosed a bloomin' volley,
An' we made the beggars cut,
An' when our pouch was emptied out,
We used the bloomin' butt,
Ho! My!
Don't yer come anigh,
When Tommy is a playin' with the baynit an' the butt.
Barrack Room Ballad.

My friend Private Mulvaney told me this, sitting on the parapet of the road to Dagshai, when we were hunting butterflies together. He had theories about the Army, and coloured clay pipes perfectly. He said that the young soldier is the best to work with, "on account av the surpassing innocinse av the child."

"Now, listen!" said Mulvaney, throwing himself full length on the wall in the sun. "I'm a born scutt av the barrick-room! The Army's mate an' dhrink to me, bekaze I'm wan av the few that can't quit ut. I've put in sivinteen years, an' the pipeclay's in the marrow av me. Av I cud have kept out av wan big dhrink a month, I wud have been a Hon'ry Lift'nint by this time — a

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nuisince to my betthers, a laughin'-shtock to my equils, an' a curse to meself. Bein' fwhat I am, I'm Privit Mulvaney, wid no good-conduc' pay an' a devourin' thirst. Always barrin' me little frind Bobs Bahadur, I know as much about the Army as most men."

I said something here.

"Wolseley be shot! Betune you an' me an' that butterfly net, he's a ramblin', incoherint sort av a divil, wid wan oi on the Quane an' the Coort, an' the other on his blessed silf — everlastin'ly playing Saysar an' Alexandrier rowled into a lump. Now Bobs is a sinsible little man. Wid Bobs an' a few three-year-olds, I'd swape any army av the earth into a towel, an' throw it away afther-wards. Faith, I'm not jokin'! 'Tis the bhoys — the raw bhoys — that don't know fwhat a bullut manes, an' wudn't care av they did — that dhu the work. They're crammed wid bull-mate till they fairly *ramps* wid good livin'; and thin, av they don't fight, they blow each other's hids off. 'Tis the trut' I'm tellin' you. They shud be kept on water an' rice in the hot weather; but there'd be a mut'ny av 'twas done.

"Did ye iver hear how Privit Mulvaney tuk the town av Lungtungpen? I thought not! 'Twas the Lift'nint got the credit; but 'twas me planned the schame. A little before I was inviladed from Burma, me an' four-an'-twenty young wans un-

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dher a Lift'nint Brazenose, was ruinin' our dijeshins thryin' to catch dacoits. An' such double-ended divils I niver knew! 'Tis only a *dab* an' a Snider that makes a dacoit. Widout thim, he's a paceful cultivator, an' felony for to shoot. We hunted, an' we hunted, an' tuk fever an' elephints now an' again; but no dacoits. Evenshually, we *puckarowed* wan man. 'Trate him tinderly,' sez the Lift'nint. So I tuk him away into the jungle, wid the Burmese Interprut'r an' my clanin'-rod. Sez I to the man, 'My paceful squireen,' sez I, 'you shquot on your hunkers an' dimonstrate to *my* frind here, where *your* frinds are whin they're at home.' Wid that I introjuced him to the clanin'-rod, an' he comminst to jabber; the Interprut'r interprutin' in betweens, an' me helpin' the Intilligince Departmint wid my clanin'-rod whin the man misremimbered.

"Prisintly, I learn that, acrost the river, about nine miles away, was a town just dhrippin' wid dahs, an' bohs an' arrows, an' dacoits, an' elephints, an' *jingles*. 'Good!' sez I; 'this office will now close!'

"That night, I went to the Lift'nint an' communicates my information. I never thought much of Lift'nint Brazenose till that night. He was shtiff wid books an' the-ouries, an' all manner av thrimmin's no manner av use. 'Town did ye say?' sez he. 'Accordin' to the the-ouries av

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War, we shud wait for reinforcemints.'—'Faith!' thinks I, 'we'd betther dig our graves thin'; for the nearest throops was up to their shtocks in the marshes out Mimbu way. 'But,' says the Lift'-nint, 'since 'tis a speshil case, I'll make an ex-cepshin. We'll visit this Lungtungpen to-night.'

"The bhoys was fairly woild wid deloight whin I tould 'em; an', by this an' that, they wint through the jungle like buck-rabbits. About midnight we come to the shtrame which I had clane forgot to minshin to my orficer. I was on, ahead, wid four bhoys, an' I thought that the Lift'nint might want to the-ourise. 'Shtrip, bhoys!' sez I. 'Shtrip to the buff, an' shwim in where glory waits!'—'But I *can't* shwim!' sez two av thim. 'To think I should live to hear that from a bhoy wid a board-school edukashin!' sez I. 'Take a lump av thimber, an' me an' Conolly here will ferry ye over, ye young ladies!'

"We got an ould tree-trunk, an' pushed off wid the kits an' the rifles on it. The night was chokin' dhark, an' just as we was fairly embarked I heard the Lift'nint behind av me callin' out. 'There's a bit av a *nullah* here, Sorr,' sez I, 'but I can feel the bottom already.' So I cud, for I was not a yard from the bank.

"'Bit av a *nullah!* Bit av an eshtuary!' sez the Lift'nint. 'Go on, ye mad Irishman! Shtrip bhoys!' I heard him laugh; an' the bhoys begun

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shtrippin' an' rollin' a log into the wather to put their kits on. So me an' Conolly shtruck out through the warm wather wid our log, an' the rest come on behind.

"That shtrame was miles woide! Orth'ris, on the rear-rank log, whispers we had got into the Thames below Sheerness by mistake. 'Kape on shwimmin', ye little blayguard,' sez I, 'an' don't go pokin' your dirty jokes at the Irriwaddy.'— 'Silince, men!' sings out the Lift'nint. So we shwum on into the black dhark, wid our chests on the logs, trustin' in the Saints an' the luck av the British Army.

"Evenshually, we hit ground — a bit av sand — an' a man. I put my heel on the back av him. He skreeched an' ran.

"'*Now* we've done it!' sez Lift'nint Brazenose. 'Where the divil *is* Lungtungpen?' There was about a minute and a half to wait. The bhoys laid a hould av their rifles an' some thried to put their belts on; we was marchin' wid fixed baynits av coorse. Thin we knew where Lungtungpen was; for we had hit the river-wall av it in the dhark, an' the whole town blazed wid thim messin' *jingles* an' Sniders like a cat's back on a frosty night. They was firin' all ways at wanst; but over our hids into the shtrame.

"'Have you got your rifles?' sez Brazenose. 'Got 'em!' sez Orth'ris. 'I've got that thief Mul-

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vaney's for all my back-pay, an' she'll kick my heart sick wid that blunderin' long shtock av hers.' —'Go on!' yells Brazenose, whippin' his sword out. 'Go on an' take the town! An' the Lord have mercy on our sowls!'

"Thin the bhoys gave wan divastatin' howl, an' pranced into the dhark, feelin' for the town, an' blindin' an' stiffin' like Cavalry Ridin' Masters whin the grass pricked their bare legs. I hammered wid the butt at some bamboo-thing that felt wake, an' the rest come an' hammered contagious, while the *jingles* was jingling, an' feroshus yells from inside was shplittin' our ears. We was too close under the wall for thim to hurt us.

"Evenshually, the thing, whatever ut was, bruk; an' the six-and-twinty av us tumbled, wan after the other, naked as we was borrun, into the town of Lungtungpen. There was a *melly* av a sumpshus kind for a whoile; but whether they tuk us, all white an' wet, for a new breed av divil, or a new kind av dacoit, I don't know. They ran as though we was both, an' we wint into thim, baynit an' butt, shriekin' wid laughin'. There was torches in the shtreets, an' I saw little Orth'ris rubbin' his showlther ivry time he loosed my long-shtock Martini; an' Brazenose walkin' into the gang wid his sword, like Diarmid av the Gowlden Collar—barring he hadn't a stitch av clothin' on him. We diskivered elephints wid dacoits under their bel-

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lies, an', what wid wan thing an' another, we was busy till mornin' takin' possession av the town of Lungtungpen.

"'Thin we halted an' formed up, the wimmen howlin' in the houses an' Lift'nint Brazenose blushin' pink in the light av the mornin' sun. 'Twas the most ondasint p'rade I iver tuk a hand in. Foive-and-twinty privits an' a orficer av the Line in review ordher, an' not as much as wud dust a fife betune 'em all in the way of clothin'! Eight av us had their belts an' pouches on; but the rest had gone in wid a handful av cartridges an' the skin God gave thim. *They* was as nakid as Vanus.

"'Number off from the right!' sez the Lift'nint. 'Odd numbers fall out to dress; even numbers pathrol the town till relieved by the dressing party.' Let me tell you, pathrollin' a town wid nothing on is an ex*pay*rience. I pathrolled for tin minutes, an' begad, before 't was over, I blushed. The wimmen laughed so. I niver blushed before or since; but I blushed all over my carkiss thin. Orth'ris didn't pathrol. He sez only, 'Portsmith Barricks an' the 'Ard av a Sunday!' Thin he lay down an' rowled any ways wid laughin'.

"Whin we was all dhressed we counted the dead — sivinty-foive dacoits besides wounded. We tuk five elephints, a hundher' an' sivinty Sniders, two hundher' dahs, and a lot av other bur-

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glarious thruck. Not a man av us was hurt — excep' maybe the Lift'nint, an' he from the shock to his dasincy.

"The Headman av Lungtungpen, who surrinder'd himself, asked the Interprut'r — 'Av the English fight like that wid their clo'es off, what in the wurruld do they do wid their clo'es on?' Orth'ris began rowlin' his eyes an' crackin' his fingers an' dancin' a step-dance for to impress the Headman. He ran to his house; an' we spint the rest av the day carryin' the Lift'nint on our showlthers round the town, an' playin' wid the Burmese babies — fat little, brown little divils, as pretty as picturs.

"Whin I was inviladed for the dysent'ry to India, I sez to the Lift'nint, 'Sorr,' sez I, 'you've the makin's in you av a great man; but, av you'll let an ould sodger spake, you're too fond of the-ourisin'.' He shuk hands wid me and sez, 'Hit high, hit low, there's no plasin' you, Mulvaney. You've seen me waltzin' through Lungtungpen like a red Injin widout the war-paint, an' you say I'm too fond av the-ourisin'?' 'Sorr,' sez I, for I loved the bhoy, 'I wud waltz wid you in that kandishin through *Hell*, an' so wud the rest av the men!' Thin I wint downshtrame in the flat an' left him my blessin'. May the Saints carry ut where ut shud go, for he was a fine upstandin' young orficer.

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"To reshume. Fwhat I've said jist shows the use av three-year-olds. Wud fifty seasoned sodgers have taken Lungtungpen in the dhark that way? No! They'd know the risk av fever and chill. Let alone the shootin'. Two hundher' might have done ut. But the three-year-olds know little an' care less; an' where there's no fear, there's no danger. Catch thim young, feed thim high, an' by the honour av that great little man Bobs, behind a good orficer 'tisn't only dacoits they'd smash wid their clo'es off — 'tis Con-ti-nental Ar-r-r-mies! They tuk Lungtungpen nakid; an' they'd take St. Pethersburg in their dhrawers! Begad, they would that!

"Here's your pipe, Sorr. Shmoke her tinderly wid honey-dew, afther letting the reek av the Canteen plug die away. But 'tis no good, thanks to you all the same, fillin' my pouch wid your chopped hay. Canteen 'baccy's like the Army. It shpoils a man's taste for moilder things."

So saying, Mulvaney took up his butterfly-net, and returned to barracks.

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MADNESS OF PRIVATE ORTHERIS

Oh! Where would I be when my froat was dry?
Oh! Where would I be when the bullets fly?
Oh! Where would I be when I come to die?
Why,
Somewheres anigh my chum.
If 'e's liquor 'e'll give me some,
If I'm dyin' 'e'll 'old my 'ead,
An' 'e'll write 'em 'Ome when I'm dead.—
Gawd send us a trusty chum!

Barrack Room Ballad.

My friends Mulvaney and Ortheris had gone on a shooting-expedition for one day. Learoyd was still in hospital, recovering from fever picked up in Burma. They sent me an invitation to join them, and were genuinely pained when I brought beer —almost enough beer to satisfy two Privates of the Line . . . and Me.

"'Twasn't for that we bid you welkim, Sorr," said Mulvaney sulkily. "'Twas for the pleasure av your comp'ny."

Ortheris came to the rescue with — "Well, 'e won't be none the worse for bringin' liquor with 'im. We ain't a file o' Dooks. We're bloomin'

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Tommies, ye cantankris Hirishman; an' 'ere's your very good 'ealth!"

We shot all the forenoon, and killed two pariah-dogs, four green parrots sitting, one kite by the burning-ghaut, one snake flying, one mud-turtle, and eight crows. Game was plentiful. Then we sat down to tiffin — "bull-mate an' bran-bread," Mulvaney called it — by the side of the river, and took pot shots at the crocodiles in the intervals of cutting up the food with our only pocket-knife. Then we drank up all the beer, and threw the bottles into the water and fired at them. After that, we eased belts and stretched ourselves on the warm sand and smoked. We were too lazy to continue shooting.

Ortheris heaved a big sigh, as he lay on his stomach with his head between his fists. Then he swore quietly into the blue sky.

"Fwhat's that for?" said Mulvaney. "Have ye not drunk enough?"

"Tott'nim Court Road, an' a gal I fancied there. Wot's the good of sodgerin'?"

"Orth'ris, me son," said Mulvaney hastily, "'tis more than likely you've got throuble in your inside wid the beer. I feel that way mesilf whin my liver gets rusty."

Ortheris went on slowly, not heeding the interruption —

"I'm a Tommy — a bloomin', eight-anna, dog-

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stealin' Tommy, with a number instead of a decent name. Wot's the good o' me? If I 'ad a stayed at 'Ome, I might a married that gal and a kep' a little shorp in the 'Ammersmith 'Igh.—'S. Orth'ris, Prac-ti-cal Taxi-der-mist.' With a stuff' fox, like they 'as in the Haylesbury Dairies, in the winder, an' a little case of blue and yaller glass-heyes, an' a little wife to call 'shorp!' 'shorp!' when the door-bell rung. As it *bis*, I'm on'y a Tommy—a Bloomin', Gawd-forsaken, Beer-swillin' Tommy. 'Rest on your harms—*'versed;* Stan' at—*bease;* *'Shun.* 'Verse—*harms.* Right an' lef'—*tarrn.* Slow—*march.* 'Alt—*front.* Rest on your harms—*'versed.* With blank cartridge—*load.*' An' that's the end o' me." He was quoting fragments from Funeral Parties' Orders.

"Stop ut!" shouted Mulvaney. "Whin you've fired into nothin' as often as me, over a better man than yoursilf, you will not make a mock av thim orders. 'Tis worse than whistlin' the 'Dead March' in barricks. An' you full as a tick, an' the sun cool, an' all an' all! I take shame for you. You're no better than a Pagin—you an' your firin'-parties an' your glass-eyes. Won't *you* stop ut, Sorr?"

What could I do? Could I tell Ortheris anything that he did not know of the pleasures of his life? I was not a Chaplain nor a Subaltern, and Ortheris had a right to speak as he thought fit.

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"Let him run, Mulvaney," I said. "It's the beer."

"No! 'Tisn't the beer," said Mulvaney. "I know fwhat's comin'. He's tuk this way now an' agin, an' it's bad — it's bad — for I'm fond av the bhoy."

Indeed, Mulvaney seemed needlessly anxious; but I knew that he looked after Ortheris in a fatherly way.

"Let me talk, let me talk," said Ortheris dreamily. "D'you stop your parrit screamin' of a 'ot day, when the cage is a-cookin' 'is pore little pink toes orf, Mulvaney?"

"Pink toes! D'ye mane to say you've pink toes undher your bullswools, ye blandanderin'" — Mulvaney gathered himself together for a terrific denunciation — "school-misthress! Pink toes! How much Bass wid the label did that ravin' child dhrink?"

"'Taint Bass," said Ortheris. "It's a bitterer beer nor that. It's 'ome-sickness!"

"Hark to him! An' he goin' Home in the *Sherapis* in the inside av four months!"

"I don't care. It's all one to me. 'Ow d'you know I ain't 'fraid o' dyin' 'fore I gets my discharge paipers?" He recommenced, in a singsong voice, the Orders.

I had never seen this side of Ortheris' character before, but evidently Mulvaney had, and attached

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serious importance to it. While Ortheris babbled, with his head on his arms, Mulvaney whispered to me —

"He's always tuk this way whin he's been checked overmuch by the childher they make Sarjints nowadays. That an' havin' nothin' to do. I can't make ut out anyways."

"Well, what does it matter? Let him talk himself through."

Ortheris began singing a parody of "The Ramrod Corps," full of cheerful allusions to battle, murder, and sudden death. He looked out across the river as he sang; and his face was quite strange to me. Mulvaney caught me by the elbow to ensure attention.

"Matther? It matthers everything! 'Tis some sort av fit that's on him. I've seen ut. 'Twill hould him all this night, an' in the middle av it he'll get out av his cot an' go rakin' in the rack for his 'coutremints. Thin he'll come over to me an' say, 'I'm goin' to Bombay. Answer for me in the mornin'.' Thin me an' him will fight as we've done before — him to go an' me to hould him — an' so we'll both come on the books for disturbin' in barricks. I've belted him, an' I've bruk his head, an' I've talked to him, but 'tis no manner av use whin the fit's on him. He's as good a bhoy as ever stepped whin his mind's clear. I know fwhat's comin', though, this night in bar-

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ricks. Lord send he doesn't loose on me whin I rise to knock him down. 'Tis that that's in my mind day an' night."

This put the case in a much less pleasant light, and fully accounted for Mulvaney's anxiety. He seemed to be trying to coax Ortheris out of the fit; for he shouted down the bank where the boy was lying—

"Listen now, you wid the 'pore pink toes' an' the glass eyes! Did you shwim the Irriwaddy at night, behin' me, as a bhoy shud; or were you hidin' under a bed, as you was at Ahmid Kheyl?"

This was at once a gross insult and a direct lie, and Mulvaney meant it to bring on a fight. But Ortheris seemed shut up in some sort of trance. He answered slowly, without a sign of irritation, in the same cadenced voice as he had used for his firing-party orders—

"*Hi* swum the Irriwaddy in the night as you know, for to take the town of Lungtungpen, nakid an' without fear. *Hand* where I was at Ahmed Kheyl you know, and four bloomin' Pathans know too. But that was summat to do, an' I didn't think o' dyin'. Now I'm sick to go 'Ome—go 'Ome—go 'Ome! No, I ain't mammysick, because my uncle brung me up, but I'm sick for London again; sick for the sounds of 'er, an' the sights of 'er, and the stinks of 'er; orange-peel and hasphalte

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an' gas comin' in over Vaux'all Bridge. Sick for the rail goin' down to Box 'Ill with your gal on your knee an' a new clay pipe in your face. That, an' the Stran' lights where you knows ev'ry one, an' the Copper that takes you up is a old friend that tuk you up before, when you was a little, smitchy boy lying loose 'tween the Temple an' the Dark Harches. No bloomin' guard-mountin', no bloomin' rotten-stone, nor khaki, an' yourself your own master with a gal to take an' see the Humaners practisin' a-hookin' dead corpses out of the Serpentine o' Sundays. An' I lef' all that for to serve the Widder beyond the seas, where there ain't no women and there ain't no liquor worth 'avin', and there ain't nothin' to see, nor do, nor say, nor feel, nor think. Lord love you, Stanley Orth'ris, but you're a bigger bloomin' fool than the rest o' the reg'ment and Mulvaney wired together! There's the Widder sittin' at 'Ome with a gold crownd on 'er 'ead; and 'ere am Hi, Stanley Orth'ris, the Widder's property, a rottin' FOOL!"

His voice rose at the end of the sentence, and he wound up with a six-shot Anglo-Vernacular oath. Mulvaney said nothing, but looked at me as if he expected that I could bring peace to poor Ortheris' troubled brain.

I remembered once at Rawal Pindi having seen a man, nearly mad with drink, sobered by being

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made a fool of. Some regiments may know what I mean. I hoped that we might slake off Ortheris in the same way, though he was perfectly sober. So I said—

"What's the use of grousing there, and speaking against the Widow?"

"I didn't!" said Ortheris. "S'elp me Gawd, I never said a word agin 'er, an' I wouldn't—not if I was to desert this minute!"

Here was my opening. "Well, you meant to, anyhow. What's the use of cracking-on for nothing? Would you slip it now if you got the chance?"

"On'y try me!" said Ortheris, jumping to his feet as if he had been stung.

Mulvaney jumped too. "Fwhat are you going to do?" said he.

"Help Ortheris down to Bombay or Karachi, whichever he likes. You can report that he separated from you before tiffin, and left his gun on the bank here!"

"I'm to report that—am I?" said Mulvaney slowly. "Very well. If Orth'ris manes to desert now, and will desert now, an' you, Sorr, who have been a frind to me an' to him, will help him to ut, I, Terence Mulvaney, on my oath which I've never bruk yet, will report as you say. But—" here he stepped up to Ortheris, and shook the stock of the fowling-piece in his face—"your

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fistes help you, Stanley Orth'ris, if ever I come across you agin!"

"I don't care!" said Ortheris. "I'm sick o' this dorg's life. Give me a chanst. Don't play with me. Le' me go!"

"Strip," said I, "and change with me, and then I'll tell you what to do."

I hoped that the absurdity of this would check Ortheris; but he had kicked off his ammunition-boots and got rid of his tunic almost before I had loosed my shirt-collar. Mulvaney gripped me by the arm —

"The fit's on him: the fit's workin' on him still! By my Honour and Sowl, we shall be accessiry to a desartion yet. Only twenty-eight days, as you say, Sorr, or fifty-six, but think o' the shame — the black shame to him an' me!" I had never seen Mulvaney so excited.

But Ortheris was quite calm, and as soon as he had exchanged clothes with me, and I stood up a Private of the Line, he said shortly, "Now! Come on. What nex'? D'ye mean fair? What must I do to get out o' this 'ere a-Hell?"

I told him that, if he would wait for two or three hours near the river, I would ride into the Station and come back with one hundred rupees. He would, with that money in his pocket, walk to the nearest side-station on the line, about five miles away, and would there take a first-class ticket for

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Karachi. Knowing that he had no money on him when he went out shooting, his regiment would not immediately wire to the seaports, but would hunt for him in the native villages near the river. Further, no one would think of seeking a deserter in a first-class carriage. At Karachi he was to buy white clothes and ship, if he could, on a cargo-steamer.

Here he broke in. If I helped him to Karachi, he would arrange all the rest. Then I ordered him to wait where he was until it was dark enough for me to ride into the Station without my dress being noticed. Now God in His wisdom has made the heart of the British Soldier, who is very often an unlicked ruffian, as soft as the heart of a little child, in order that he may believe in and follow his officers into tight and nasty places. He does not so readily come to believe in a "civilian," but, when he does, he believes implicitly and like a dog. I had had the honour of the friendship of Private Ortheris, at intervals, for more than three years, and we had dealt with each other as man by man. Consequently, he considered that all my words were true, and not spoken lightly.

Mulvaney and I left him in the high grass near the river-bank, and went away, still keeping to the high grass, towards my horse. The shirt scratched me horribly.

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We waited nearly two hours for the dusk to fall and allow me to ride off. We spoke of Ortheris in whispers, and strained our ears to catch any sound from the spot where we had left him. But we heard nothing except the wind in the plume-grass.

"I've bruk his head," said Mulvaney earnestly, "time an' agin. I've nearly kilt him wid the belt, an' *yet* I can't knock thim fits out av his soft head. No! An' he's not soft, for he's reasonable an' likely by natur'. Fwhat is ut? Is ut his breedin' which is nothin', or his edukashin which he niver got? You that think ye know things, answer me that."

But I found no answer. I was wondering how long Ortheris, in the bank of the river, would hold out, and whether I should be forced to help him to desert, as I had given my word.

Just as the dusk shut down and, with a very heavy heart, I was beginning to saddle up my horse, we heard wild shouts from the river.

The devils had departed from Private Stanley Ortheris, No. 22639, B Company. The loneliness, the dusk, and the waiting had driven them out, as I had hoped. We set off at the double and found him plunging about wildly through the grass, with his coat off—my coat off, I mean. He was calling for us like a madman.

When we reached him he was dripping with

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perspiration, and trembling like a startled horse. We had great difficulty in soothing him. He complained that he was in civilian kit, and wanted to tear my clothes off his body. I ordered him to strip, and we made a second exchange as quickly as possible.

The rasp of his own "grayback" shirt and the squeak of his boots seemed to bring him to himself. He put his hands before his eyes and said —

"Wot was it? I ain't mad, I ain't sunstrook, an' I've bin an' gone an' said, an' bin an' gone an' done . . . *Wot* 'ave I bin an' done!"

"Fwhat have you done?" said Mulvaney. "You've dishgraced yourself — though that's no matter. You've dishgraced B Comp'ny, an' worst av all, you've dishgraced *Me!* Me that taught you how for to walk abroad like a man — whin you was a dhirty little, fish-backed little, whimperin' little recruity. As you are now, Stanley Orth'ris!"

Ortheris said nothing for a while. Then he unslung his belt, heavy with the badges of half a dozen regiments that his own had lain with, and handed it over to Mulvaney.

"I'm too little for to mill you, Mulvaney," said he, "an' you've strook me before; but you can take an' cut me in two with this 'ere if you like."

Mulvaney turned to me.

"Lave me to talk to him, Sorr," said Mulvaney.

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I left, and on my way home thought a good deal over Ortheris in particular, and my friend Private Thomas Atkins whom I love, in general.

But I could not come to any conclusion of any kind whatever.

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THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

Jain 'Ardin' was a Sarjint's wife,
A Sarjint's wife wus she.
She married of 'im in Orldershort
An' comed acrost the sea.
(*Chorus*) 'Ave you never 'eard tell o' Jain 'Ardin'?
Jain 'Ardin'?
Jain 'Ardin'?
'Ave you never 'eard tell o' Jain 'Ardin'?
The pride o' the Compan*ee*?

Old Barrack-Room Ballad.

"A GENTLEMAN who doesn't know the Circasian Circle ought not to stand up for it—puttin' everybody out." That was what Miss McKenna said, and the Sergeant who was my *vis-à-vis* looked the same thing. I was afraid of Miss McKenna. She was six feet high, all yellow freckles and red hair, and was simply clad in white satin shoes, a pink muslin dress, an apple-green stuff sash, and black silk gloves, with yellow roses in her hair. Wherefore I fled from Miss McKenna and sought my friend Private Mulvaney, who was at the cant—refreshment-table.

"So you've been dancin' with little Jhansi McKenna, Sorr—she that's goin' to marry Corp'ril

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Slane? Whin you next conversh wid your lorruds an' your ladies, tell thim you've danced wid little Jhansi. 'Tis a thing to be proud av."

But I wasn't proud. I was humble. I saw a story in Private Mulvaney's eye; and besides, if he stayed too long at the bar, he would, I knew, qualify for more pack-drill. Now to meet an esteemed friend doing pack-drill outside the guard-room is embarrassing, especially if you happen to be walking with his Commanding Officer.

"Come on to the parade-ground, Mulvaney, it's cooler there, and tell me about Miss McKenna. What is she, and who is she, and why is she called 'Jhansi'?"

"D'ye mane to say you've niver heard av Ould Pummeloe's daughter? An' you thinkin' you know things! I'm wid ye in a minut' whin me poipe's lit."

We came out under the stars. Mulvaney sat down on one of the artillery bridges, and began in the usual way: his pipe between his teeth, his big hands clasped and dropped between his knees, and his cap well on the back of his head —

"Whin Mrs. Mulvaney that is was Miss Shadd that was, you were a dale younger than you are now, an' the Army was dif'rint in sev'ril e-senshuls. Bhoys have no call for to marry nowadays, an' that's why the Army has so few rale, good, honust, swearin', strapagin', tinder-hearted, heavy-futted

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wives as ut used to have whin I was a Corp'ril. I was rejuced aftherwards — but no matther — I was a Corp'ril wanst. In thim times a man lived *an'* died wi. his rigimint; an', by natur', he married whin he was a *man*. Whin I was Corp'ril — Mother av Hivin, how the rigimint has died an' been borrun since that day! — my Colour-Sarjint was Ould McKenna, an' a married man tu. An' his woife — his first woife, for he married three times did McKenna — was Bridget McKenna, from Portarlington, like mesilf. I've misremembered fwhat her first name was; but in B Comp'ny we called her 'Ould Pummeloe,' by reason av her figure, which was entirely cir-cum-fe-renshill. Like the big dhrum! Now that woman — God rock her sowl to rest in glory! — was for everlastin' havin' childher; an' McKenna, whin the fifth or sixth come squallin' on to the musther-roll, swore he wud number thim off in future. But Ould Pummeloe she prayed av him to christen them after the names av the stations they was borrun in. So there was Colaba McKenna, an' Muttra McKenna, an' a whole Prisidincy av other McKennas, an' little Jhansi, dancin' over yonder. Whin the childher wasn't bornin', they was dying; for, av our childher die like sheep in these days, they died like flies thin. I lost me own little Shad — but no matther. 'Tis long ago, and Mrs. Mulvaney niver had another.

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"I'm digresshin. Wan divil's hot summer, there come an order from some mad ijjit, whose name I misremember, for the rigimint to go up-country. Maybe they wanted to know how the new rail carried throops. They knew! On me sowl, they knew before they was done! Ould Pummeloe had just buried Muttra McKenna; an', the season bein' onwholesim, only little Jhansi McKenna, who was four year ould thin, was left on hand.

"Five children gone in fourteen months. 'Twas harrd, wasn't ut?

"So we wint up to our new Station in that blazin' heat — may the curse av Saint Lawrence conshume the man who gave the ordher! Will I iver forget that move? They gave us two wake thrains to the rigimint; an' we was eight hundher' and sivinty strong. There was A, B, C, an' D Companies in the secon' thrain, wid twelve women, no orficers' ladies, an' thirteen childher. We was to go six hundher' miles, an' railways was new in thim days. Whin we had been a night in the belly av the thrain — the men ragin' in their shirts an' dhrinkin' anything they cud find, an' eatin' bad fruit-stuff whin they cud, for we cudn't stop 'em — I was a Corp'ril thin — the cholera bruk out wid the dawnin' av the day.

"Pray to the Saints you may niver see cholera in a throop-thrain! 'Tis like the judgmint av

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God hittin' down from the nakid sky! We run into a rest-camp — as ut might have been Ludianny, but not by any means so comfortable. The Orficer Commandin' sent a telegrapt up the line, three hundher' mile up, askin' for help. Faith, we wanted ut, for ivry sowl av the followers ran for the dear life as soon as the thrain stopped; an' by the time that telegrapt was writ there wasn't a naygur in the Station exceptin' the telegrapt-clerk — an' he only bekaze he was held down to his chair by the scruff av his sneakin' black neck. Thin the day began wid the noise in the carr'ges, an' the rattle av the men on the platform fallin' over, arms an' all, as they stud for to answer the Comp'ny musther-roll before goin' over to the camp. 'Tisn't for me to say what like the cholera was like. Maybe the Doctor cud ha' tould, av he hadn't dropped on to the platform from the door av a carriage where we was takin' out the dead. He died wid the rest. Some bhoys had died in the night. We tuk out sivin, and twinty more was sickenin' as we tuk thim. The women was huddled up anyways, screamin' wid fear.

"Sez the Commandin' Orficer, whose name I misremember, 'Take the women over to that tope av trees yonder. Get thim out av the camp. 'Tis no place for thim.'

"Ould Pummeloe was sittin' on her beddin'-rowl, thryin' to kape little Jhansi quiet. 'Go off

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to that tope!' sez the Orficer. 'Go out av the men's way!'

"'Be damned av I do!' sez Ould Pummeloe, an' little Jhansi, squattin' by her mother's side, squeaks out, 'Be damned av I do,' tu. Thin Ould Pummeloe turns to the women an' she sez, 'Are ye goin' to let the bhoys die while you're picnickin', ye sluts?' sez she. ''Tis wather they want. Come on an' help.'

"Wid that, she turns up her sleeves an' steps out for a well behind the rest-camp — little Jhansi trottin' behind wid a *lotah* an' string, an' the other women followin' like lambs, wid horse-buckets and cookin'-pots. Whin all the things was full, Ould Pummeloe marches back into camp —'twas like a battle-field wid all the glory missin'— at the hid av the rigimint av women.

"'McKenna, me man!' she sez, wid a voice on her like grand-roun's challenge, 'tell the bhoys to be quiet. Ould Pummeloe's comin' to look afther thim — wid free dhrinks.'

"Thin we cheered, an' the cheerin' in the lines was louder than the noise av the poor divils wid the sickness on thim. But not much.

"You see, we was a new an' raw rigimint in those days, an' we cud make neither head nor tail av the sickness; an' so we was useless. The men was goin' roun' an' about like dumb sheep, waitin' for the nex' man to fall over, an' sayin' undher

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their spache, 'Fwhat is ut? In the name of God, *fwhat* is ut?' 'Twas horrible. But through ut all, up an' down, an' down an' up, wint Ould Pummeloe an' little Jhansi — all we cud see av the baby, undher a dead man's helmut wid the chin-strap swingin' about her little stummick — up an' down wid the wather an' fwhat brandy there was.

"Now an' thin Ould Pummeloe, the tears runnin' down her fat, red face, sez, 'Me bhoys, me poor, dead, darlin' bhoys!' But, for the most, she was thryin' to put heart into the men an' kape thim stiddy; and little Jhansi was tellin' thim all they wud be 'betther in the mornin'.' 'Twas a thrick she'd picked up from hearin' Ould Pummeloe whin Muttra was burnin' out wid fever. In the mornin'! 'Twas the iverlastin' mornin' at St. Pether's Gate was the mornin' for sivin-an'-twinty good men; and twinty more was sick to the death in that bitter, burnin' sun. But the women worked like angils, as I've said, an' the men like divils, till two doctors come down from above, and we was rescued.

"But just before that, Ould Pummeloe, on her knees over a bhoy in my squad — right-cot man to me he was in the barrick — tellin' him the wurrud av the Church that niver failed a man yet, sez, 'Hould me up, bhoys! I'm feelin' bloody sick!' 'Twas the sun, not the cholera, did ut. She mis-

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THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

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[illegible] is ut? In the name of God, [illegible] 'Twas horrible. But through ut [illegible] an' down an' up, wint Ould [illegible] Jhansi — all we cud see av [illegible] a dead man's helmut wid the [illegible] about her little stummick — up [illegible] her an' fwhat brandy there

[illegible] Ould Pummeloe, the tears run- [illegible] fat, red face, sez, 'Me bhoys, me [illegible] bhoys!' But, for the most, [illegible] to put heart into the men an' kape [illegible] and little Jhansi was tellin' thim all [illegible] better in the mornin'.' 'Twas a [illegible] picked up from hearin' Ould Pumme- [illegible] Mairia was burnin' out wid fever. In [illegible]! 'Twas the iverlastin' mornin' at St. Peter's Gate was the mornin' for sivin-an'-twinty good men, an' twinty more was sick to the death in that bitter, [illegible]. But the women worked like angils, as I've said, an' the men like divils, till two [illegible] come down from above, and we was rescued.

But just before that, Ould Pummeloe, on her [illegible] over a bhoy in my squad — right-cot man [illegible] was in the barrick — tellin' him the wur- [illegible] the Church that niver failed a man yet, sez, [illegible] bhoys! I'm feelin' bloody sick!' [illegible] the cholera, did ut, [illegible] mis-

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remembered she was only wearin' her ould black bonnet, an' she died wid 'McKenna, me man,' houldin' her up, an' the bhoys howled whin they buried her.

"That night a big wind blew, an' blew, an' blew, an' blew the tents flat. But it blew the cholera away, an' niver another case there was all the while we was waitin' — ten days in quarantin'. Av you will belave me, the thrack av the sickness in the camp was for all the wurruld the thrack av a man walkin' four times in a figur'-av-eight through the tents. They say 'tis the Wandherin' Jew takes the cholera wid him. I believe ut.

"An' *that*," said Mulvaney illogically, "is the cause why little Jhansi McKenna is fwhat she is. She was brought up by the Quartermaster-Sergeant's wife whin McKenna died, but she b'longs to B Comp'ny; and this tale I'm tellin' you—*wid* a proper appreciashin av Jhansi McKenna—I've belted into ivry recruity av the Comp'ny as he was drafted. 'Faith, 'twas me belted Corp'ril Slane into askin' the girl!"

"Not really?"

"Man, I did! She's no beauty to look at, but she's Ould Pummeloe's daughter, an' 'tis my juty to provide for her. Just before Slane got his promotion I sez to him, 'Slane,' sez I, 'to-morrow 'twill be insubordinashin av me to chastise you; but, by the sowl av Ould Pummeloe, who is now

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in glory, av you don't give me your wurrud to ask Jhansi McKenna at wanst, I'll peel the flesh off yer bones wid a brass huk to-night. 'Tis a dishgrace to B Comp'ny she's been single so long!' sez I. Was I goin' to let a three-year-ould preshume to discoorse wid me — my will bein' set? No! Slane wint an' asked her. He's a good bhoy is Slane. Wan av these days he'll get into the Com'ssariat an' dhrive a buggy wid his — savin's. So I provided for Ould Pummeloe's daughter; an' now you go along an' dance agin wid her."

And I did.

I felt a respect for Miss Jhansi McKenna; and I went to her wedding later on.

Perhaps I will tell you about that one of these days.

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THE INCARNATION OF KRISHNA MULVANEY

Wohl auf, my bully cavaliers,
We ride to church to-day,
The man that hasn't got a horse
Must steal one straight away.

. . . . . .

Be reverent, men, remember
This is a Gottes haus.
Du, Conrad, cut along der aisle
And schenck der whiskey aus.

Hans Breitmann's Ride to Church.

Once upon a time, very far from England, there lived three men who loved each other so greatly that neither man nor woman could come between them. They were in no sense refined, nor to be admitted to the outer-door mats of decent folk, because they happened to be private soldiers in Her Majesty's Army; and private soldiers of our service have small time for self-culture. Their duty is to keep themselves and their accoutrements specklessly clean, to refrain from getting drunk more often than is necessary, to obey their superiors, and to pray for a war. All these things my friends accomplished; and of their own motion

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threw in some fighting-work for which the Army Regulations did not call. Their fate sent them to serve in India, which is not a golden country, though poets have sung otherwise. There men die with great swiftness, and those who live suffer many and curious things. I do not think that my friends concerned themselves much with the social or political aspects of the East. They attended a not unimportant war on the northern frontier, another one on our western boundary, and a third in Upper Burma. Then their regiment sat still to recruit, and the boundless monotony of cantonment life was their portion. They were drilled morning and evening on the same dusty parade-ground. They wandered up and down the same stretch of dusty white road, attended the same church and the same grog-shop, and slept in the same lime-washed barn of a barrack for two long years. There was Mulvaney, the father in the craft, who had served with various regiments from Bermuda to Halifax, old in war, scarred, reckless, resourceful, and in his pious hours an unequalled soldier. To him turned for help and comfort six and a half feet of slow-moving, heavy-footed Yorkshireman, born on the wolds, bred in the dales, and educated chiefly among the carriers' carts at the back of York railway-station. His name was Learoyd, and his chief virtue an unmitigated patience which helped him to win fights. How

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Ortheris, a fox-terrier of a Cockney, ever came to be one of the trio, is a mystery which even to-day I cannot explain. "There was always three av us," Mulvaney used to say. "An' by the grace av God, so long as our service lasts, three av us they'll always be. 'Tis betther so."

They desired no companionship beyond their own, and it was evil for any man of the regiment who attempted dispute with them. Physical argument was out of the question as regarded Mulvaney and the Yorkshireman; and assault on Ortheris meant a combined attack from these twain—a business which no five men were anxious to have on their hands. Therefore they flourished, sharing their drinks, their tobacco, and their money; good luck and evil; battle and the chances of death; life and the chances of happiness from Calicut in southern, to Peshawur in northern India.

Through no merit of my own it was my good fortune to be in a measure admitted to their friendship—frankly by Mulvaney from the beginning, sullenly and with reluctance by Learoyd, and suspiciously by Ortheris, who held to it that no man not in the Army could fraternise with a red-coat. "Like to like," said he. "I'm a bloomin' sodger—he's a bloomin' civilian. 'Tain't natural—that's all."

But that was not all. They thawed progres-

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sively, and in the thawing told me more of their lives and adventures than I am ever likely to write.

Omitting all else, this tale begins with the Lamentable Thirst that was at the beginning of First Causes. Never was such a thirst — Mulvaney told me so. They kicked against their compulsory virtue, but the attempt was only successful in the case of Ortheris. He, whose talents were many, went forth into the highways and stole a dog from a "civilian" — *videlicet*, some one, he knew not who, not in the Army. Now that civilian was but newly connected by marriage with the Colonel of the regiment, and outcry was made from quarters least anticipated by Ortheris, and in the end he was forced, lest a worse thing should happen, to dispose at ridiculously unremunerative rates of as promising a small terrier as ever graced one end of a leading-string. The purchase-money was barely sufficient for one small outbreak which led him to the guard-room. He escaped, however, with nothing worse than a severe reprimand and a few hours of punishment drill. Not for nothing had he acquired the reputation of being "the best soldier of his inches" in the regiment. Mulvaney had taught personal cleanliness and efficiency as the first articles of his companions' creed. "A dhirty man," he was used to say, in the speech of his kind, "goes to Clink for a weakness in the knees, an' is coort-martialled for a pair av

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socks missin'; but a clane man, such as is an ornament to his service — a man whose buttons are gold, whose coat is wax upon him, an' whose 'coutrements are widout a speck — *that* man may, spakin' in reason, do fwhat he likes an' dhrink from day to divil. That's the pride av bein' dacint."

We sat together, upon a day, in the shade of a ravine far from the barracks, where a watercourse used to run in rainy weather. Behind us was the scrub jungle, in which jackals, peacocks, the gray wolves of the North-Western Provinces, and occasionally a tiger estrayed from Central India, were supposed to dwell. In front lay the cantonment, glaring white under a glaring sun; and on either side ran the broad road that led to Delhi.

It was the scrub that suggested to my mind the wisdom of Mulvaney taking a day's leave and going upon a shooting-tour. The peacock is a holy bird throughout India, and he who slays one is in danger of being mobbed by the nearest villagers; but on the last occasion that Mulvaney had gone forth, he had contrived, without in the least offending local religious susceptibilities, to return with six beautiful peacock skins which he sold to profit. It seemed just possible then ——

"But fwhat manner av use is ut to me goin' out widout a dhrink? The ground's powdher-dhry underfoot, an' ut gets unto the throat fit to kill," wailed Mulvaney, looking at me reproachfully.

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'An' a peacock is not a bird you can catch the tail av onless ye run. Can a man run on wather —and jungle-wather too?"

Ortheris had considered the question in all its bearings. He spoke, chewing his pipe-stem meditatively the while:

"Go forth, return in glory,
To Clusium's royal 'ome:
An' round these bloomin' temples 'ang
The bloomin' shields o' Rome.

You better go. You ain't like to shoot yourself —not while there's a chanst of liquor. Me an' Learoyd 'll stay at 'ome an' keep shop —'case o' anythin' turnin' up. But you go out with a gas-pipe gun an' ketch the little peacockses or somethin'. You kin get one day's leave easy as winkin'. Go along an' get it, an' get peacockses or somethin'."

"Jock," said Mulvaney, turning to Learoyd, who was half asleep under the shadow of the bank. He roused slowly.

"Sitha, Mulvaaney, go," said he.

And Mulvaney went; cursing his allies with Irish fluency and barrack-room point.

"Take note," he said, when he had won his holiday, and appeared dressed in his roughest clothes, with the only other regimental fowling-piece in his hand. "Take note, Jock, an' you,

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Orth'ris, I am goin' in the face av my own will—all for to please you. I misdoubt anythin' will come av permiscuous huntin' afther peacockses in a desolit lan'; an' I know that I will lie down an' die wid thirrrst. Me catch peacockses for you, ye lazy scutts — an' be sacrificed by the peasanthry — Ugh!"

He waved a huge paw and went away.

At twilight, long before the appointed hour, he returned empty-handed, much begrimed with dirt.

"Peacockses?" queried Ortheris from the safe rest of a barrack-room table whereon he was smoking cross-legged, Learoyd fast asleep on a bench.

"Jock," said Mulvaney, without answering, as he stirred up the sleeper. "Jock, can ye fight? Will ye fight?"

Very slowly the meaning of the words communicated itself to the half-roused man. He understood — and again — what might these things mean? Mulvaney was shaking him savagely. Meantime the men in the room howled with delight. There was war in the confederacy at last — war and the breaking of bonds.

Barrack-room etiquette is stringent. On the direct challenge must follow the direct reply. This is more binding than the ties of tried friendship. Once again Mulvaney repeated the question. Learoyd answered by the only means in his power, and so swiftly that the Irishman had barely time

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to avoid the blow. The laughter around increased. Learoyd looked bewilderedly at his friend — himself as greatly bewildered. Ortheris dropped from the table because his world was falling.

"Come outside," said Mulvaney, and as the occupants of the barrack-room prepared joyously to follow, he turned and said furiously, "There will be no fight this night — onless any wan av you is wishful to assist. The man that does, follows on."

No man moved. The three passed out into the moonlight, Learoyd fumbling with the buttons of his coat. The parade-ground was deserted except for the scurrying jackals. Mulvaney's impetuous rush carried his companions far into the open ere Learoyd attempted to turn round and continue the discussion.

"Be still now. 'Twas my fault for beginnin' things in the middle av an end, Jock. I should ha' comminst wid an explanation; but Jock, dear, on your sowl are ye fit, think you, for the finest fight that iver was — betther than fightin' me? Considher before ye answer."

More than ever puzzled, Learoyd turned round two or three times, felt an arm, kicked tentatively, and answered, "Ah'm fit." He was accustomed to fight blindly at the bidding of the superior mind.

They sat them down, the men looking on from

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afar, and Mulvaney untangled himself in mighty words.

"Followin' your fools' scheme, I wint out into the thrackless desert beyond the barricks. An' there I met a pious Hindu dhriving a bullock-kyart. I tuk ut for granted he wud be delighted for to convoy me a piece, an' I jumped in——"

"You long, lazy, black-haired swine," drawled Ortheris, who would have done the same thing under similar circumstances.

"'Twas the height av policy. That naygur-man dhruv miles an' miles — as far as the new railway line they're buildin' now back av the Tavi river. 'Tis a kyart for dhirt only,' says he now an' again timoreously, to get me out av ut. 'Dhirt I am,' sez I, 'an' the dhryest that you iver kyarted. Dhrive on, me son, an' glory be wid you.' At that I wint to slape, an' took no heed till he pulled up on the embankmint av the line where the coolies were pilin' mud. There was a matther av two thousand coolies on that line — you remimber that. Prisintly a bell rang, an' they throops off to a big pay-shed. 'Where's the white man in charge?' sez I to my kyart-dhriver. 'In the shed,' sez he, 'engaged on a riffle.'—'A fwhat?' sez I. 'Riffle,' sez he. 'You take ticket. He take money. You get no-thin'.'—'Oho!' sez I, 'that's fwhat the shuperior an' cultivated man calls a raffle, me misbe-

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guided child av darkness an' sin. Lead on to that raffle, though fwhat the mischief 'tis doin' so far away from uts home — which is the charity-bazaar at Christmas, an' the colonel's wife grinnin' behind the tea-table — is more than I know.' Wid that I wint to the shed an' found 'twas pay-day among the coolies. Their wages was on a table forninst a big, fine, red buck av a man — sivun fut high, four fut wide, an' three fut thick, wid a fist on him like a corn-sack. He was payin' the coolies fair an' easy, but he wud ask each man if he wud raffle that month, an' each man sez, 'Yes,' av coorse. Thin he wud deduct from their wages accordin'. Whin all was paid, he filled an ould cigar-box full av gun-wads an' scatthered ut among the coolies. They did not take much joy av that performince, an' small wondher. A man close to me picks up a black gun-wad an' sings out, 'I have ut.'—'Good may ut do you,' sez I. The coolie wint forward to this big, fine, red man, who threw a cloth off av the most sumpshus, jooled, enamelled an' variously bedivilled sedan-chair I iver saw."

"Sedan-chair! Put your 'ead in a bag. That was a palanquin. Don't yer know a palanquin when you see it?" said Ortheris with great scorn.

"I chuse to call ut sedan-chair, an' chair ut shall be, little man," continued the Irishman. "'Twas a most amazin' chair — all lined wid pink silk an'

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fitted wid red silk curtains. 'Here ut is,' sez the red man. 'Here ut is,' sez the coolie, an' he grinned weakly-ways. 'Is ut any use to you?' sez the red man. 'No,' sez the coolie; 'I'd like to make a presint av ut to you.'—'I am graciously pleased to accept that same,' sez the red man; an' at that all the coolies cried aloud in fwhat was mint for cheerful notes, an' wint back to their diggin', lavin' me alone in the shed. The red man saw me, an' his face grew blue on his big, fat neck. 'Fwhat d'you want here?' sez he. 'Standin'-room an' no more,' sez I, 'onless it may be fwhat ye niver had, an' that's manners, ye rafflin' ruffian,' for I was not goin' to have the Service throd upon. 'Out of this,' sez he. 'I'm in charge av this section av construction.'—'I'm in charge av mesilf,' sez I, 'an' it's like I will stay a while. D'ye raffle much in these parts?'—'Fwhat's that to you?' sez he. 'Nothin',' sez I, 'but a great dale to you, for begad I'm thinkin' you get the full half av your revenue from that sedan-chair. Is ut always raffled so?' I sez, an' wid that I wint to a coolie to ask questions. Bhoys, that man's name is Dearsley, an' he's been rafflin' that ould sedan-chair monthly this matther av nine months. Ivry coolie on the section takes a ticket — or he gives 'em the go — wanst a month on pay-day. Ivry coolie that wins ut gives ut back to him, for 'tis too big to carry away, an' he'd sack the man

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that thried to sell ut. That Dearsley has been makin' the rowlin' wealth av Roshus by nefarious rafflin'. Think av the burnin' shame to the sufferin' coolie-man that the army in Injia are bound to protect an' nourish in their bosoms! Two thousand coolies defrauded wanst a month!"

"Dom t' coolies. Hast gotten t' cheer, mon?" said Learoyd.

"Hould on. Havin' onearthed this amazin' an' stupenjus fraud committed by the man Dearsley, I hild a council av war; he thryin' all the time to sejuce me into a fight wid opprobrious language. That sedan-chair niver belonged by right to any foreman av coolies. 'Tis a king's chair, or a quane's. There's gold on ut an' silk an' all manner av trapesemints. Bhoys, 'tis not for me to countenance any sort av wrong-doin'—me bein' the ould man—but—anyway he has had ut nine months, an' he dare not make throuble av ut was taken from him. Five miles away, or ut may be six——"

There was a long pause, and the jackals howled merrily. Learoyd bared one arm, and contemplated it in the moonlight. Then he nodded partly to himself and partly to his friends. Ortheris wriggled with suppressed emotion.

"I thought ye wud see the reasonableness av ut," said Mulvaney. "I made bould to say as much to the man before. He was for a direct

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front attack — fut, horse, an' guns — an' all for nothin', seein' that I had no thransport to convey the machine away. 'I will not argue wid you,' sez I, 'this day, but subsequintly, Mister Dearsley, me rafflin' jool, we talk ut out lengthways. 'Tis no good policy to swindle the naygur av his hard-earned emolumints, an' by presint informashin'— 'twas the kyart-man that tould me — 'ye've been perpethrating that same for nine months. But I'm a just man,' sez I, 'an' overlookin' the presumpshin that yondher settee wid the gilt top was not come by honust'— at that he turned sky-green, so I knew things was more thrue than tellable — 'not come by honust, I'm willin' to compound the felony for this month's winnin's.'"

"Ah! Ho!" from Learoyd and Ortheris.

"That man Dearsley's rushin' on his fate," continued Mulvaney, solemnly wagging his head. "All Hell had no name bad enough for me that tide. Faith, he called me a robber! Me! that was savin' him from continuin' in his evil ways widout a remonstrince — an' to a man av conscience a remonstrince may change the chune av his life. ''Tis not for me to argue,' sez I, 'fwhatever ye are, Mister Dearsley; but, by my hand, I'll take away the temptation for you that lies in that sedan-chair.'— 'You will have to fight me for ut,' sez he, 'for well I know you will never dare make report to any one.'— 'Fight I will,' sez I, 'but not

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this day, for I'm rejuced for want av nourishment.' —'Ye're an ould bould hand,' sez he, sizin' me up an' down; 'an' a jool av a fight we will have. Eat now an' dhrink, an' go your way.' Wid that he gave me some hump an' whisky — good whisky — an' we talked av this an' that the while. 'It goes hard on me now,' sez I, wipin' my mouth, 'to confiscate that piece av furniture, but justice is justice.'—'Ye've not got ut yet,' sez he; 'there's the fight between.'—'There is,' sez I, 'an' a good fight. Ye shall have the pick av the best quality in my rigimint for the dinner you have given this day.' Thin I came hot-fut to you two. Hould your tongue, the both. 'Tis this way. To-morrow we three will go there, an' he shall have his pick betune me an' Jock. Jock's a deceivin' fighter, for he is all fat to the eye, an' he moves slow. Now I'm all beef to the look, an' I move quick. By my reckonin' the Dearsley man won't take me; so me an' Orth'ris 'll see fair play. Jock, I tell you, 'twill be big fightin'— whipped, wid the cream above the jam. Afther the business 'twill take a good three av us — Jock 'll be very hurt — to haul away that sedan-chair."

"'Palanquin." This from Ortheris.

"Fwhatever ut is, we must have ut. 'Tis the only sellin' piece av property widin reach that we can get so cheap. An' fwhat's a fight afther all? He has robbed the naygur-man, dishonust. We

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rob him honust for the sake av the whisky he gave me."

"But wot'll we do with the bloomin' article when we've got it? Them palanquins are as big as 'ouses, an' uncommon 'ard to sell, as McCleary said when ye stole the sentry-box from the Curragh."

"Who's goin' to do t' fightin'?" said Learoyd, and Ortheris subsided. The three returned to barracks without a word. Mulvaney's last argument clinched the matter. This palanquin was property, vendible, and to be attained in the simplest and least embarrassing fashion. It would eventually become beer. Great was Mulvaney.

Next afternoon a procession of three formed itself and disappeared into the scrub in the direction of the new railway line. Learoyd alone was without care, for Mulvaney dived darkly into the future, and little Ortheris feared the unknown. What befell at that interview in the lonely payshed by the side of the half-built embankment, only a few hundred coolies know, and their tale is a confusing one, running thus —

"We were at work. Three men in red coats came. They saw the Sahib — Dearsley Sahib. They made oration; and noticeably the small man among the red-coats. Dearsley Sahib also made oration, and used many very strong words. Upon this talk they departed together to an open space,

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and there the fat man in the red coat fought with Dearsley Sahib after the custom of white men—with his hands, making no noise, and never at all pulling Dearsley Sahib's hair. Such of us as were not afraid beheld these things for just so long a time as a man needs to cook the mid-day meal. The small man in the red coat had possessed himself of Dearsley Sahib's watch. No, he did not steal that watch. He held it in his hand, and at certain seasons made outcry, and the twain ceased their combat, which was like the combat of young bulls in spring. Both men were soon all red, but Dearsley Sahib was much more red than the other. Seeing this, and fearing for his life—because we greatly loved him—some fifty of us made shift to rush upon the red-coats. But a certain man—very black as to the hair, and in no way to be confused with the small man, or the fat man who fought—that man, we affirm, ran upon us, and of us he embraced some ten or fifty in both arms, and beat our heads together, so that our livers turned to water, and we ran away. It is not good to interfere in the fightings of white men. After that Dearsley Sahib fell and did not rise, these men jumped upon his stomach and despoiled him of all his money, and attempted to fire the pay-shed, and departed. Is it true that Dearsley Sahib makes no complaint of these latter things having been done? We were senseless with fear, and do

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not at all remember. There was no palanquin near the pay-shed. What do we know about palanquins? Is it true that Dearsley Sahib does not return to this place, on account of his sickness, for ten days? This is the fault of those bad men in the red coats, who should be severely punished; for Dearsley Sahib is both our father and mother, and we love him much. Yet, if Dearsley Sahib does not return to this place at all, we will speak the truth. There was a palanquin, for the up-keep of which we were forced to pay nine-tenths of our monthly wage. On such mulctings Dearsley Sahib allowed us to make obeisance to him before the palanquin. What could we do? We were poor men. He took a full half of our wages. Will the Government repay us those moneys? Those three men in red coats bore the palanquin upon their shoulders and departed. All the money that Dearsley Sahib had taken from us was in the cushions of that palanquin. Therefore they stole it. Thousands of rupees were there—all our money. It was our bank-box, to fill which we cheerfully contributed to Dearsley Sahib three-sevenths of our monthly wage. Why does the white man look upon us with the eye of disfavour? Before God, there was a palanquin, and now there is no palanquin; and if they send the police here to make inquisition, we can only say that there never has been any palanquin. Why should a

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palanquin be near these works? We are poor men, and we know nothing."

Such is the simplest version of the simplest story connected with the descent upon Dearsley. From the lips of the coolies I received it. Dearsley himself was in no condition to say anything, and Mulvaney preserved a massive silence, broken only by the occasional licking of the lips. He had seen a fight so gorgeous that even his power of speech was taken from him. I respected that reserve until, three days after the affair, I discovered in a disused stable in my quarters a palanquin of unchastened splendour — evidently in past days the litter of a queen. The pole whereby it swung between the shoulders of the bearers was rich with the painted *papier-maché* of Cashmere. The shoulder-pads were of yellow silk. The panels of the litter itself were ablaze with the loves of all the gods and goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon — lacquer on cedar. The cedar sliding doors were fitted with hasps of translucent Jaipur enamel and ran in grooves shod with silver. The cushions were of brocaded Delhi silk, and the curtains which once hid any glimpse of the beauty of the king's palace were stiff with gold. Closer investigation showed that the entire fabric was everywhere rubbed and discoloured by time and wear; but even thus it was sufficiently gorgeous to deserve housing on the threshold of a royal zenana. I found no fault

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with it, except that it was in my stable. Then, trying to lift it by the silver-shod shoulder-pole, I laughed. The road from Dearsley's pay-shed to the cantonment was a narrow and uneven one, and traversed by three very inexperienced palanquin-bearers, one of whom was sorely battered about the head, must have been a path of torment. Still I did not quite recognise the right of the three musketeers to turn me into a "fence" for stolen property.

"I'm askin' you to warehouse ut," said Mulvaney when he was brought to consider the question. "There's no steal in ut. Dearsley tould us we cud have ut if we fought. Jack fought—an', oh, Sorr, when the throuble was at uts finest an' Jock was bleedin' like a stuck pig, an' little Orth'ris was shquealin' on one leg chewin' big bites out av Dearsley's watch, I wud ha' given my place at the fight to have had you see wan round. He tuk Jock, as I suspicioned he would, an' Jock was deceptive. Nine roun's they were even matched, an' at the tenth —— About that palanquin now. There's not the least throuble in the world, or we wud not ha' brought ut here. You will ondherstand that the Queen — God bless her! — does not reckon for a privit soldier to kape elephints an' palanquins an' sich in barricks. Afther we had dhragged ut down from Dearsley's through that cruel scrub that near broke Orth'ris's heart, we set

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ut in the ravine for a night; an' a thief av a porcupine an' a civet-cat av a jackal roosted in ut, as well we knew in the mornin'. I put ut to you, Sorr, is an elegint palanquin, fit for the princess, the natural abidin'-place av all the vermin in cantonmints? We brought ut to you, afther dark, and put ut in your shtable. Do not let your conscience prick. Think av the rejoicin' men in the pay-shed yonder—lookin' at Dearsley wid his head tied up in a towel—an' well knowin' that they can dhraw their pay ivry month widout stoppages for riffles. Indirectly, Sorr, you have rescued from an onprincipled son av a night-hawk the peasanthry av a numerous village. An' besides, will I let that sedan-chair rot on our hands? Not I. 'Tis not ivry day a piece av pure joolry comes into the market. There's not a king widin these forty miles"—he waved his hand round the dusty horizon—"not a king wud not be glad to buy ut. Some day mesilf, whin I have leisure, I'll take ut up along the road an' dishpose av ut."

"How?" said I, for I knew the man was capable of anything.

"Get into ut, av coorse, and keep wan eye open through the curtains. Whin I see a likely man av the native persuasion, I will descind blushin' from my canopy and say, 'Buy a palanquin, ye black scutt?' I will have to hire four men to carry

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me first, though; and that's impossible till next pay-day."

Curiously enough, Learoyd, who had fought for the prize, and in the winning secured the highest pleasure life had to offer him, was altogether disposed to undervalue it, while Ortheris openly said it would be better to break the thing up. Dearsley, he argued, might be a many-sided man, capable, despite his magnificent fighting qualities, of setting in motion the machinery of the civil law—a thing much abhorred by the soldier. Under any circumstances their fun had come and passed; the next pay-day was close at hand, when there would be beer for all. Wherefore longer conserve the painted palanquin?

"A first-class rifle-shot an' a good little man av your inches you are," said Mulvaney. "But you niver had a head worth a soft-boiled egg. 'Tis me has to lie awake av nights schamin' an' plottin' for the three av us. Orth'ris, me son, 'tis no matther av a few gallons av beer—no, nor twenty gallons—but tubs an' vats an' firkins in that sedan-chair. Who ut was, an' what ut was, an' how ut got there, we do not know; but I know in my bones that you an' me an' Jock wid his sprained thumb will get a fortune thereby. Lave me alone, an' let me think."

Meantime the palanquin stayed in my stall, the key of which was in Mulvaney's hands.

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Pay-day came, and with it beer. It was not in experience to hope that Mulvaney, dried by four weeks' drought, would avoid excess. Next morning he and the palanquin had disappeared. He had taken the precaution of getting three days' leave "to see a friend on the railway," and the colonel, well knowing that the seasonal outburst was near, and hoping it would spend its force beyond the limits of his jurisdiction, cheerfully gave him all he demanded. At this point Mulvaney's history, as recorded in the mess-room, stopped.

Ortheris carried it not much further. "No, 'e wasn't drunk," said the little man loyally; "the liquor was no more than feelin' its way round inside of 'im; but 'e went an' filled that 'ole bloomin' palanquin with bottles 'fore 'e went off. 'E's gone an' 'ired six men to carry 'im, an' I 'ad to 'elp 'im into 'is nupshal couch, 'cause 'e wouldn't 'ear reason. 'E's gone off in 'is shirt an' trousies, swearin' tremenjus—gone down the road in the palanquin, wavin' 'is legs out o' windy."

"Yes," said I, "but where?"

"Now you arx me a question. 'E said 'e was goin' to sell that palanquin, but from observations what happened when I was stuffin' 'im through the door, I fancy 'e's gone to the new embankment to mock at Dearsley. 'Soon as Jock's off duty I'm goin' there to see if 'e's safe—not Mulvaney, but t'other man. My saints, but I pity 'im

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as 'elps Terence out o' the palanquin when 'e's once fair drunk!"

"He'll come back without harm," I said.

"'Corse 'e will. On'y question is, what'll 'e be doin' on the road? Killing Dearsley, like as not. 'E shouldn't 'a' gone without Jock or me."

Reinforced by Learoyd, Ortheris sought the foreman of the coolie-gang. Dearsley's head was still embellished with towels. Mulvaney, drunk or sober, would have struck no man in that condition, and Dearsley indignantly denied that he would have taken advantage of the intoxicated brave.

"I had my pick o' you two," he explained to Learoyd, "and you got my palanquin — not before I'd made my profit on it. Why'd I do harm when everything's settled? Your man *did* come here — drunk as Davy's sow on a frosty night — came a-purpose to mock me — stuck his head out of the door an' called me a crucified hodman. I made him drunker, an' sent him along. But I never touched him."

To these things Learoyd, slow to perceive the evidences of sincerity, answered only, "If owt comes to Mulvaaney 'long o' you, I'll gripple you, clouts or no clouts on your ugly head, an' I'll draw t' throat twistyways, mon. See there now."

The embassy removed itself, and Dearsley, the

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battered, laughed alone over his supper that even ing.

Three days passed — a fourth and a fifth. The week drew to a close, and Mulvaney did not return. He, his royal palanquin, and his six attendants, had vanished into air. A very large and a very tipsy soldier, his feet sticking out of the litter of a reigning princess, is not a thing to travel along the ways without comment. Yet no man of all the country round had seen any such wonder. He was, and he was not; and Learoyd suggested the immediate smashment of Dearsley as a sacrifice to his ghost. Ortheris insisted that all was well, and in the light of past experience his hopes seemed reasonable.

"When Mulvaney goes up the road," said he, "'e's like to go a very long ways up, specially when 'e's so blue drunk as 'e is now. But what gets me is 'is not bein' 'eard of pullin' wool off the niggers somewheres about. That don't look good. The drink must ha' died out in 'im by this, unless 'e's broke a bank, an' then — Why don't 'e come back? 'E didn't ought to ha' gone off without us."

Even Ortheris's heart sank at the end of the seventh day, for half the regiment were out scouring the country-side, and Learoyd had been forced to fight two men who hinted openly that Mulvaney had deserted. To do him justice, the colo-

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nel laughed at the notion, even when it was put forward by his much-trusted adjutant.

"Mulvaney would as soon think of deserting as you would," said he. "No; he's either fallen into a mischief among the villagers — and yet that isn't likely, for he'd blarney himself out of the Pit; or else he is engaged on urgent private affairs — some stupendous devilment that we shall hear of at mess after it has been the round of the barrack-rooms. The worst of it is that I shall have to give him twenty-eight days' confinement at least for being absent without leave, just when I most want him to lick the new batch of recruits into shape. I never knew a man who could put a polish on young soldiers as quickly as Mulvaney can. How does he do it?"

"With blarney and the buckle-end of a belt, sir," said the adjutant. "He is worth a couple of non-commissioned officers when we are dealing with an Irish draft, and the London lads seem to adore him. The worst of it is that if he goes to the cells the other two are neither to hold nor to bind till he comes out again. I believe Ortheris preaches mutiny on those occasions, and I know that the mere presence of Learoyd mourning for Mulvaney kills all the cheerfulness of his room. The sergeants tell me that he allows no man to laugh when he feels unhappy. They are a queer gang."

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"For all that, I wish we had a few more of them. I like a well-conducted regiment, but these pasty-faced, shifty-eyed, mealy-mouthed young slouchers from the depot worry me sometimes with their offensive virtue. They don't seem to have backbone enough to do anything but play cards and prowl round the married quarters. I believe I'd forgive that old villain on the spot if he turned up with any sort of explanation that I could in decency accept."

"Not likely to be much difficulty about that, sir," said the adjutant. "Mulvaney's explanations are only one degree less wonderful than his performances. They say that when he was in the Black Tyrone, before he came to us, he was discovered on the banks of the Liffey trying to sell his colonel's charger to a Donegal dealer as a perfect lady's hack. Shackbolt commanded the Tyrone then."

"Shackbolt must have had apoplexy at the thought of his ramping war-horses answering to that description. He used to buy unbacked devils, and tame them on some pet theory of starvation. What did Mulvaney say?"

"That he was a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, anxious to 'sell the poor baste where he would get something to fill out his dimples.' Shackbolt laughed, but I fancy that was why Mulvaney exchanged to ours."

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"I wish he were back," said the colonel; "for I like him and believe he likes me."

That evening, to cheer our souls, Learoyd, Ortheris, and I went into the waste to smoke out a porcupine. All the dogs attended, but even their clamour — and they began to discuss the shortcomings of porcupines before they left cantonments — could not take us out of ourselves. A large, low moon turned the tops of the plume-grass to silver, and the stunted camelthorn bushes and sour tamarisks into the likenesses of trooping devils. The smell of the sun had not left the earth, and little aimless winds blowing across the rose-gardens to the southward brought the scent of dried roses and water. Our fire once started, and the dogs craftily disposed to wait the dash of the porcupine, we climbed to the top of a rain-scarred hillock of earth, and looked across the scrub seamed with cattle-paths, white with the long grass, and dotted with spots of level pond-bottom, where the snipe would gather in winter.

"This," said Ortheris, with a sigh, as he took in the unkempt desolation of it all, "this is sanguinary. This is unusually sanguinary. Sort o' mad country. Like a grate when the fire's put out by the sun." He shaded his eyes against the moonlight. "An' there's a loony dancin' in the middle of it all. Quite right. I'd dance too if I wasn't so downheart."

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There pranced a Portent in the face of the moon — a huge and ragged spirit of the waste, that flapped its wings from afar. It had risen out of the earth; it was coming towards us, and its outline was never twice the same. The toga, table-cloth, or dressing-gown, whatever the creature wore, took a hundred shapes. Once it stopped on a neighbouring mound and flung all its legs and arms to the winds.

"My, but that scarecrow 'as got 'em bad!" said Ortheris. "Seems like if 'e comes any furder we'll 'ave to argify with 'im."

Learoyd raised himself from the dirt as a bull clears his flanks of the wallow. And as a bull bellows, so he, after a short minute at gaze, gave tongue to the stars.

"MULVAANEY! MULVAANEY! A-hoo!"

Oh then it was that we yelled, and the figure dipped into the hollow, till, with a crash of rending grass, the lost one strode up to the light of the fire, and disappeared to the waist in a wave of joyous dogs! Then Learoyd and Ortheris gave greeting, bass and falsetto together, both swallowing a lump in the throat.

"You damned fool!" said they, and severally pounded him with their fists.

"Go easy!" he answered, wrapping a huge arm round each. "I would have you to know that I am a god, to be treated as such — tho', by

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my faith, I fancy I've got to go to the guard-room just like a privit soldier."

The latter part of the sentence destroyed the suspicions raised by the former. Any one would have been justified in regarding Mulvaney as mad. He was hatless and shoeless, and his shirt and trousers were dropping off him. But he wore one wondrous garment — a gigantic cloak that fell from collar-bone to heel — of pale pink silk, wrought all over, in cunningest needlework of hands long since dead, with the loves of the Hindu gods. The monstrous figures leaped in and out of the light of the fire as he settled the folds round him.

Ortheris handled the stuff respectfully for a moment, while I was trying to remember where I had seen it before. Then he screamed, "What *'ave* you done with the palanquin? You're wearin' the linin'."

"I am," said the Irishman, "an' by the same token the 'broidery is scrapin' my hide off. I've lived in this sumpshus counterpane for four days. Me son, I begin to ondherstand why the naygur is no use. Widout me boots, an' me trousies like an openwork stocking on a gyurl's leg at a dance, I begin to feel like a naygur-man — all fearful an' timoreous. Give me a poipe an' I'll tell on."

He lit a pipe, resumed his grip of his two friends, and rocked to and fro in a gale of laughter.

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"Mulvaney," said Ortheris sternly, "'taint no time for laughin'. You've given Jock an' me more trouble than you're worth. You 'ave been absent without leave, an' you'll go into cells for that; an' you 'ave come back disgustin'ly dressed an' most improper in the linin' o' that bloomin' palanquin. Instid of which you laugh. An' *we* thought you was dead all the time."

"Bhoys," said the culprit, still shaking gently, "whin I've done my tale you may cry if you like, an' little Orth'ris here can thrample my inside out. Ha' done an' listen. My performinces have been stupenjus: my luck has been the blessed luck av the British Army — an' there's no betther than that. I went out dhrunk an' dhrinkin' in the palanquin, and I have come back a pink god. Did any of you go to Dearsley afther my time was up? He was at the bottom of ut all."

"Ah said so," murmured Learoyd. "To-morrow ah'll smash t' face in upon his heead."

"Ye will not. Dearsley's a jool av a man. Afther Ortheris had put me into the palanquin an' the six bearer-men were gruntin' down the road, I tuk thought to mock Dearsley for that fight. So I tould thim, 'Go to the embankmint,' and there, bein' most amazin' full, I shtuck my head out av the concern an' passed compliments wid Dearsley. I must ha' miscalled him outrageous, for whin I am that way the power av the

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tongue comes on me. I can bare remimber tellin' him that his mouth opened endways like the mouth av a skate, which was thrue afther Learoyd had handled ut; an' I clear remimber his takin' no manner nor matter av offence, but givin' me a big dhrink of beer. 'Twas the beer did the thrick, for I crawled back into the palanquin, steppin' on me right ear wid me left foot, an' thin I slept like the dead. Wanst I half-roused, an' begad the noise in my head was tremenjus — roarin' and rattlin' an' poundin', such as was quite new to me. 'Mother av Mercy,' thinks I, 'fwhat a concertina I will have on my shoulders whin I wake!' An' wid that I curls mysilf up to sleep before ut should get hould on me. Bhoys, that noise was not dhrink, 'twas the rattle av a thrain!"

There followed an impressive pause.

"Yes, he had put me on a thrain — put me, palanquin and all, an' six black assassins av his own coolies that was in his nefarious confidence, on the flat of a ballast-thruck, and we were rowlin' an' bowlin' along to Benares. Glory be that I did not wake up thin an' introjuce mysilf to the coolies. As I was sayin', I slept for the betther part av a day an' a night. But remimber you, that that man Dearsley had packed me off on wan av his material-thrains to Benares, all for to make me overstay my leave an' get me into the cells."

The explanation was an eminently rational one.

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Benares lay at least ten hours by rail from the cantonments, and nothing in the world could have saved Mulvaney from arrest as a deserter had he appeared there in the apparel of his orgies. Dearsley had not forgotten to take revenge. Learoyd, drawing back a little, began to place soft blows over selected portions of Mulvaney's body. His thoughts were away on the embankment, and they meditated evil for Dearsley. Mulvaney continued—

"Whin I was full awake the palanquin was set down in a street, I suspicioned, for I cud hear people passin' an' talkin'. But I knew well I was far from home. There is a queer smell upon our cantonments—a smell av dried earth and brick-kilns wid whiffs av cavalry stable-litter. This place smelt marigold flowers an' bad wather, an' wanst somethin' alive came an' blew heavy with his muzzle at the chink av the shutter. 'It's in a village I am,' thinks I to mysilf, 'an' the parochial buffalo is investigatin' the palanquin.' But anyways I had no desire to move. Only lie still whin you're in foreign parts, an' the standin' luck av the British Army will carry ye through. That is an epigram. I made ut.

"Thin a lot av whishperin' divils surrounded the palanquin. 'Take ut up,' sez wan man. 'But who'll pay us?' sez another. 'The Maharanee's minister, av coorse,' sez the man. 'Oho!' sez I to mysilf, 'I'm a quane in me own right, wid a

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minister to pay me expenses. I'll be an emperor if I lie still long enough; but this is no village I've found.' I lay quiet, but I gummed me right eye to a crack av the shutters, an' I saw that the whole street was crammed wid palanquins an' horses, an' a sprinklin' av naked priests all yellow powder an' tigers' tails. But I may tell you, Orth'ris, an' you, Learoyd, that av all the palanquins ours was the most imperial an' magnificent. Now a palanquin means a native lady all the world over, except whin a soldier av the Quane happens to be takin' a ride. 'Women an' priests?' sez I. 'Your father's son is in the right pew this time, Terence. There will be proceedin's.' Six black divils in pink muslin tuk up the palanquin, an' oh! but the rowlin' an' the rockin' made me sick. Thin we got fair jammed among the palanquins — not more than fifty av them — an' we grated an' bumped like Queenstown potato-smacks in a runnin' tide. I cud hear the women gigglin' and squirkin' in their palanquins, but mine was the royal equipage. They made way for ut, an', begad, the pink muslin men o' mine were howlin', 'Room for the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun.' Do you know aught av the lady, Sorr?"

"Yes," said I. "She is a very estimable old queen of the Central Indian States, and they say she is fat. How on earth could she go to Benares without all the city knowing her palanquin?"

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"'Twas the eternal foolishness av the naygurmen. They saw the palanquin lying loneful an' forlornsome, an' the beauty av ut, after Dearsley's men had dhropped ut and gone away, an' they gave ut the best name that occurred to thim. Quite right too. For aught we know, the ould lady was thravellin' *incog* — like me. I'm glad to hear she's fat. I was no light weight mysilf, an' my men were mortial anxious to dhrop me under a great big archway promiscuously ornamented wid the most improper carvin's an' cuttin's I iver saw. Begad! they made me blush — like a — like a Maharanee."

"The temple of Prithi-Devi," I murmured, remembering the monstrous horrors of that sculptured archway at Benares.

"Pretty Devilskins, savin' your presence, Sorr! There was nothin' pretty about ut, except me. 'Twas all half dhark, an' whin the coolies left they shut a big black gate behind av us, an' half a company av fat yellow priests began pully-haulin' the palanquins into a dharker place yet — a big stone hall full av pillars, an' gods, an' incense, an' all manner av similar thruck. The gate disconcerted me, for I perceived I wud have to go forward to get out, my retreat bein' cut off. By the same token, a good priest makes a bad palanquin-coolie. Begad! they nearly turned me inside out draggin' the palanquin to the temple. Now the dispo-

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sishin av the forces inside was this way. The Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun — that was me — lay by the favour av Providence on the far left flank behind the dhark av a pillar carved with elephints' heads. The remainder av the palanquins was in a big half circle facing in to the biggest, fattest, an' most amazin' she-god that iver I dreamed av. Her head ran up into the black above us, an' her feet stuck out in the light av a little fire av melted butter that a priest was feedin' out av a butter-dish. Thin a man began to sing an' play on somethin' back in the dhark, and 'twas a queer song. Ut made my hair lift on the back av my neck. Thin the doors av all the palanquins slid back, an' the women bundled out. I saw what I'll niver see again. 'Twas more glorious than thransformations at a pantomime, for they was in pink an' blue an' silver an' red an' grass green, wid di'monds an' im'ralds an' great red rubies all over thim. But that was the least part av the glory. O bhoys, they were more lovely than the like av any loveliness in hiven; ay, their little bare feet were better than the white hands av a lord's lady, an' their mouths were like puckered roses, an' their eyes were bigger an' dharker than the eyes of any livin' women I've seen. Ye may laugh, but I'm speakin' truth. I niver saw the like, an' niver I will again."

"Seeing that in all probability you were watching the wives and daughters of most of the kings

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of India, the chances are that you won't," I said, for it was dawning on me that Mulvaney had stumbled upon a big Queens' Praying at Benares.

"I niver will," he said mournfully. "That sight doesn't come twist to any man. It made me ashamed to watch. A fat priest knocked at my door. I didn't think he'd have the insolince to disturb the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun, so I lay still. 'The old cow's asleep,' sez he to another. 'Let her be,' sez that. ''Twill be long before she has a calf!' I might ha' known before he spoke that all a woman prays for in Injia — an' for matter o' that in England too — is childher. That made me more sorry I'd come, me bein', as you well know, a childless man."

He was silent for a moment, thinking of his little son, dead many years ago.

"They prayed, an' the butter-fires blazed up, an' the incense turned everything blue, an' between that an' the fires the women looked as tho' they were all ablaze an' twinklin'. They took hold av the she-god's knees, they cried out an' they threw themselves about, an' that world-without-end-amen music was dhrivin' thim mad. Mother av Hiven! how they cried, an' the ould she-god grinnin' above thim all so scornful! The dhrink was dyin' out in me fast, an' I was thinkin' harder than the thoughts wud go through my head — thinkin' how to get out, an' all manner

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of nonsense as well. The women were rockin' in rows, their di'mond belts clickin', an' the tears runnin' out betune their hands, an' the lights were goin' lower an' dharker. Thin there was a blaze like lightnin' from the roof, an' that showed me the inside av the palanquin, an' at the end where my foot was, stood the livin' spit an' image o' mysilf worked on the linin'. This man here, ut was."

He hunted in the folds of his pink cloak, ran a hand under one, and thrust into the firelight a foot-long embroidered presentment of the great god Krishna playing on a flute. The heavy jowl, the staring eye, and the blue-black moustache of the god made up a far-off resemblance to Mulvaney.

"The blaze was gone in a wink, but the whole schame came to me thin. I believe I was mad too. I slid the off-shutter open an' rowled out into the dhark behind the elephint-head pillar, tucked up my trousies to my knees, slipped off my boots, an' tuk a general hould av all the pink linin' av the palanquin. Glory be, ut ripped out like a woman's dhriss whin you tread on ut at a sergeants' ball, an' a bottle came with ut. I tuk the bottle an' the next minut I was out av the dhark av the pillar, the pink linin' wrapped round me most graceful, the music thunderin' like kettledrums, an' a could draft blowin' round my bare

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legs. By this hand that did ut, I was Khrishna tootlin' on the flute — the god that the rig'mental chaplain talks about. A sweet sight I must ha' looked. I knew my eyes were big, and my face was wax-white, an' at the worst I must ha' looked like a ghost. But they took me for the livin' god. The music stopped, and the women were dead dumb, an' I crooked my legs like a shepherd on a china basin, an' I did the ghost-waggle with my feet as I had done ut at the rig'mental theatre many times, an' I slid acrost the width av that temple in front av the she-god, tootlin' on the beer-bottle."

"Wot did you toot?" demanded Ortheris the practical.

"Me? Oh!" Mulvaney sprang up, suiting the action to the word, and sliding gravely in front of us, a dilapidated but imposing deity in the half light. "I sang —

> "Only say
> You'll be Mrs. Brallaghan.
> Don't say nay,
> Charmin' Judy Callaghan.

I didn't know me own voice when I sang. An' oh! 'twas pitiful to see the women. The darlin's were down on their faces. Whin I passed the last wan I cud see her poor little fingers workin' one in another as if she wanted to touch my feet. So I dhrew the tail av this pink overcoat over her

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head for the greater honour, an' I slid into the dhark on the other side av the temple, and fetched up in the arms av a big fat priest. All I wanted was to get away clear. So I tuk him by his greasy throat an' shut the speech out av him. 'Out!' sez I. 'Which way, ye fat heathen?'—'Oh!' sez he. 'Man,' sez I. 'White man, soldier man, common soldier man. Where in the name av confusion is the back door?' The women in the temple were still on their faces, an' a young priest was holdin' out his arms above their heads.

"'This way,' sez my fat friend, duckin' behind a big bull-god an' divin' into a passage. Thin I remembered that I must ha' made the miraculous reputation av that temple for the next fifty years. 'Not so fast,' I sez, an' I held out both my hands wid a wink. That ould thief smiled like a father. I tuk him by the back av the neck in case he should be wishful to put a knife into me unbeknownst, an' I ran him up an' down the passage twice to collect his sensibilities! 'Be quiet,' sez he, in English. 'Now you talk sense,' I sez. 'Fwhat'll you give me for the use av that most iligant palanquin I have no time to take away?'—'Don't tell,' sez he. 'Is ut like?' sez I. 'But ye might give me my railway fare. I'm far from my home an' I've done you a service.' Bhoys, 'tis a good thing to be a priest. The ould man

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niver throubled himself to dhraw from a bank. As I will prove to you subsequint, he philandered all round the slack av his clothes an' began dribblin' ten-rupee notes, old gold mohurs, and rupees into my hand till I could hould no more."

"You lie!" said Ortheris. "You're mad or sunstrook. A native don't give coin unless you cut it out o' 'im. 'Tain't nature."

"Then my lie an' my sunstroke is concealed under that lump av sod yonder," retorted Mulvaney unruffled, nodding across the scrub. "An' there's a dale more in nature than your squidgy little legs have iver taken you to, Orth'ris, me son. Four hundred an' thirty-four rupees by my reckonin', *an'* a big fat gold necklace that I took from him as a remimbrancer, was our share in that business."

"An' 'e give it you for love?" said Ortheris.

"We were alone in that passage. Maybe I was a trifle too pressin', but considher fwhat I had done for the good av the temple and the iverlastin' joy av those women. 'Twas cheap at the price. I wud ha' taken more if I cud ha' found ut. I turned the ould man upside down at the last, but he was milked dhry. Thin he opened a door in another passage, an' I found mysilf up to my knees in Benares river-water, an' bad smellin' ut is. More by token, I had come out on the river-line close to the burnin'-ghaut and contagious to a cracklin'

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MULVANEY AS KRISHNA

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[illegible] troubled himself to dhraw from a bank. [illegible] will prove to you subsequint, he [illegible] [illegible] round the slack av his clothes [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] notes, old gold [illegible] [illegible] rupees into my hand till I could hou[illegible]."

"You [illegible]" said Ortheris. "Y[illegible] or sunst[illegible] A native don't give [illegible] [illegible]less you cut [illegible] o' 'im. 'Tain't nature."

"Then my lie an' my sunst[illegible]ke is conceal[illegible] [illegible] that lump av sod yo[illegible]," retorted M[illegible] [illegible] unruffled, nodding a[illegible] the scrub. "An' [illegible] a dale more in [illegible] than your s[illegible]igy [illegible] have iver[illegible] you to, Orth[illegible], me [illegible] [illegible]rty-four rupees by my [illegible] [illegible]d necklace that I took [illegible]ncer, was our share in [illegible]

"A[illegible] [illegible] love?" [illegible]id Ortheris.

"W[illegible] [illegible] Maybe I was a trifle [illegible] what I had done for the [illegible] the iverlastin' joy av th[illegible] 'Tw[illegible] at the price. I w[illegible] [illegible]ken more [illegible] ha' found ut. I [illegible] ould m[illegible] [illegible]e down at the last, but [illegible]lked d[illegible] Thin he [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] found my [illegible] to my knees [illegible] an' [illegible] More [illegible] out o[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]se to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]racklin'

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corpse. This was in the heart av the night, for I had been four hours in the temple. There was a crowd av boats tied up, so I tuk wan an' wint across the river. Thin I came home acrost country, lyin' up by day."

"How on earth did you manage?" I said.

"How did Sir Frederick Roberts get from Cabul to Candahar? He marched an' he niver tould how near he was to breakin' down. That's why he is fwhat he is. An' now—" Mulvaney yawned portentously. "Now I will go an' give mysilf up for absince widout leave. It's eight an' twenty days an' the rough end of the colonel's tongue in orderly-room, any way you look at ut. But 'tis cheap at the price."

"Mulvaney," said I softly. "If there happens to be any sort of excuse that the colonel can in any way accept, I have a notion that you'll get nothing more than the dressing-down. The new recruits are in, and ——"

"Not a word more, Sorr. Is ut excuses the ould man wants? 'Tis not my way, but he shall have thim. I'll tell him I was engaged in financial operations connected wid a church," and he flapped his way to cantonments and the cells, singing lustily—

"So they sent a corp'ril's file,
And they put me in the gyard-room
For conduck unbecomin' of a soldier."

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And when he was lost in the midst of the moonlight we could hear the refrain —

> "Bang upon the big drum, bash upon the cymbals,
> As we go marchin' along, boys, oh!
> For although in this campaign
> There's no whisky nor champagne,
> We'll keep our spirits goin' with a song, boys!"

Therewith he surrendered himself to the joyful and almost weeping guard, and was made much of by his fellows. But to the colonel he said that he had been smitten with sunstroke and had lain insensible on a villager's cot for untold hours; and between laughter and good-will the affair was smoothed over, so that he could, next day, teach the new recruits how to "Fear God, Honour the Queen, Shoot Straight, and Keep Clean."

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THE SOLID MULDOON

Did ye see John Malone, wid his shinin', brand-new hat?
Did ye see how he walked like a grand aristocrat?
There was flags an' banners wavin' high, an' dhress and shtyle
were shown,
But the best av all the company was Misther John Malone.
John Malone.

THERE had been a royal dog-fight in the ravine at the back of the rifle-butts, between Learoyd's Jock and Ortheris's Blue Rot — both mongrel Rampur hounds, chiefly ribs and teeth. It lasted for twenty happy, howling minutes, and then Blue Rot collapsed and Ortheris paid Learoyd three rupees, and we were all very thirsty. A dog-fight is a most heating entertainment, quite apart from the shouting, because Rampurs fight over a couple of acres of ground. Later, when the sound of belt-badges clicking against the necks of beer-bottles had died away, conversation drifted from dog to man-fights of all kinds. Humans resemble red-deer in some respects. Any talk of fighting seems to wake up a sort of imp in their breasts, and they bell one to the other, exactly like challenging bucks. This is noticeable even in men who consider themselves

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superior to Privates of the Line: it shows the Refining Influence of Civilisation and the March of Progress.

Tale provoked tale, and each tale more beer. Even dreamy Learoyd's eyes began to brighten, and he unburdened himself of a long history in which a trip to Malham Cove, a girl at Pateley Brigg, a ganger, himself and a pair of clogs were mixed in drawling tangle.

"An' so Ah coot's yead oppen from t' chin to t' hair, an' he was abed for t' matter o' a month," concluded Learoyd pensively.

Mulvaney came out of a reverie — he was lying down — and flourished his heels in the air. "You're a man, Learoyd," said he critically, "but you've only fought wid men, an' that's an ivry-day expayrience; but I've stud up to a ghost, an' that was *not* an ivry-day expayrience."

"No?" said Ortheris, throwing a cork at him. "You git up an' address the 'ouse — you an' yer expayriences. Is it a bigger one nor usual?"

"'Twas the livin' trut'!" answered Mulvaney, stretching out a huge arm and catching Ortheris by the collar. "Now where are ye, me son? Will ye take the wurrud av the Lorrd out av my mouth another time?" He shook him to emphasise the question.

"No, somethin' else, though," said Ortheris, making a dash at Mulvaney's pipe, capturing

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it and holding it at arm's length; "I'll chuck it acrost the ditch if you don't let me go!"

"You maraudin' hathen! 'Tis the only cutty I iver loved. Handle her tinder or I'll chuck *you* acrost the nullah. If that poipe was bruk — Ah! Give her back to me, Sorr!"

Ortheris had passed the treasure to my hand. It was an absolutely perfect clay, as shiny as the black ball at Pool. I took it reverently, but I was firm.

"Will you tell us about the ghost-fight if I do?" I said.

"Is ut the shtory that's troublin' you? Av coorse I will. I mint to all along. I was only gettin' at ut my own way, as Popp Doggle said whin they found him thrying to ram a cartridge down the muzzle. Orth'ris, fall away!"

He released the little Londoner, took back his pipe, filled it, and his eyes twinkled. He has the most eloquent eyes of any one that I know.

"Did I iver tell you," he began, "that I was wanst the divil av a man?"

"You did," said Learoyd, with a childish gravity that made Ortheris yell with laughter, for Mulvaney was always impressing upon us his great merits in the old days.

"Did I iver tell you," Mulvaney continued calmly, "that I was wanst more av a divil than I am now?"

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"Mer—ria! You don't mean it?" said Ortheris.

"Whin I was Corp'ril — I wus rejuced afterwards — but, as I say, *whin* I was Corp'ril, I was a divil av a man."

He was silent for nearly a minute, while his mind rummaged among old memories and his eye glowed. He bit upon the pipe-stem and charged into his tale.

"Eyah! They was great times. I'm ould now; me hide's wore off in patches; sinthrygo has disconceited me, an' I'm a married man tu. But I've had my day — I've had my day, an' nothin' can take away the taste av that! Oh, my time past, whin I put me fut through ivry livin' wan av the Tin Commandmints between Revelly and Lights Out, blew the froth off a pewter, wiped me moustache wid the back av me hand, an' slept on ut all as quiet as a little child! But ut's over — ut's over, an' 'twill niver come back to me; not though I prayed for a week av Sundays. Was there *any* wan in the Ould Rig'mint to touch Corp'ril Terence Mulvaney whin that same was turned out for sedukshin? I niver met him. Ivry woman that was not a witch was worth the runnin' afther in those days, an' ivry man was my dearest frind or — I had stripped to him an' we knew which was the betther av the tu.

"Whin I was a Corp'ril I wud not ha' changed

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wid the Colonel — no, nor yet the Commandher-in-Chief. I wud be a Sargint. There was nothin' I wud not be! Mother av Hivin, look at me! Fwhat am I *now?*

"We was quartered in a big cantonmint—'tis no manner of use namin' names, for ut might give the barricks disrepitation — an' I was the Imperor av the Earth to my own mind, an' wan or tu women thought the same. Small blame to thim. Afther we had lain there a year, Bragin, the Colour-Sargint av E Comp'ny, wint an' took a wife that was lady's maid to some big lady in the Station. She's dead now, is Annie Bragin — died in childbed at Kirpa Tal, or ut may ha' been Almorah — seven — nine years gone, an' Bragin he married agin. But she was a pretty woman whin Bragin inthrojuced her to cantonmint society. She had eyes like the brown av a buttherfly's wing whin the sun catches ut, an' a waist no thicker than my arm, an' a little sof' button av a mouth I would ha' gone through all Asia bristlin' wid bay'nits to get the kiss av. An' her hair was as long as the tail av the Colonel's charger — forgive me mentionin' that blunderin' baste in the same mouthful with Annie Bragin — but 'twas all shpun gold, an' time was when a lock av ut was more than di'monds to me. There was niver pretty woman yet, an' I've had thruck wid a few, cud open the door to Annie Bragin.

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"'Twas in the Cath'lic Chapel I saw her first, me oi rolling round as usual to see fwhat was to be seen. 'You're too good for Bragin, my love,' thinks I to mesilf, 'but that's a mistake I can put straight, or my name is not Terence Mulvaney.'

"Now take my wurrd for ut, you Orth'ris there an' Learoyd, an' kape out av the Married Quarters — as I did not. No good iver comes av ut, an' there's always the chance av your bein' found wid your face in the dirt, a long picket in the back av your head, an' your hands playing the fifes on the tread av another man's doorstep. 'Twas so we found O'Hara, he that Rafferty killed six years gone, when he wint to his death wid his hair oiled, whistlin' 'Larry O'Rourke' betune his teeth. Kape out av the Married Quarters, I say, as I did not. 'Tis onwholesim, 'tis dangerous, an' 'tis ivrything else that's bad, but — O my sowl, 'tis swate while ut lasts!

"I was always hangin' about there whin I was off duty an' Bragin wasn't, but niver a sweet word beyon' ordinar' did I get from Annie Bragin. 'Tis the pervarsity av the sect,' sez I to mesilf, an' gave my cap another cock on my head an' straightened my back — 'twas the back av a Dhrum-Major in those days — an' wint off as tho' I did not care, wid all the women in the Married Quarters laughin'. I was pershuaded — most bhoys *are*,

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I'm thinkin' — that no woman born av woman cud stand against me av I hild up my little finger. I had reason fer thinkin' that way — till I met Annie Bragin.

"Time an' agin whin I was blandandherin' in the dusk a man wud go past me as quiet as a cat. 'That's quare,' thinks I, 'for I am, or I should be, the only man in these parts. Now what divilment can Annie be up to?' Thin I called myself a blayguard for thinkin' such things; but I thought thim all the same. An' that, mark you, is the way av a man.

"Wan evenin' I said:—'Mrs. Bragin, manin' no disrespect to you, who is that Corp'ril man' — I had seen the stripes, though I cud niver get sight av his face—'*who* is that Corp'ril man that comes in always whin I'm goin' away?'

"'Mother av God!' sez she, turnin' as white as my belt; 'have *you* seen him too?'

"'Seen him?' sez I; 'av coorse I have. Did ye want me not to see him, for'— we were standin' talkin' in the dhark, outside the verandah av Bragin's quarters — 'you'd betther tell me to shut me eyes. Onless I'm mistaken, he's come now.'

"An', sure enough, the Corp'ril man was walkin' to us, hangin' his head down as though he was ashamed av himself.

"'Good-night, Mrs. Bragin,' sez I, very cool; ''tis not for me to interfere wid your *a-moors;* but

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you might manage some things wid more dacincy. I'm off to canteen,' I sez.

"I turned on my heel an' wint away, swearin' I wud give that man a dhressin' that wud shtop him messin' about the Married Quarters for a month an' a week. I had not tuk ten paces before Annie Bragin was hangin' on to my arm, an' I cud feel that she was shakin' all over.

"'Stay wid me, Mister Mulvaney,' sez she; 'you're flesh an' blood, at the least — are ye not?'

"'I'm *all* that,' sez I, an' my anger wint away in a flash. 'Will I want to be asked twice, Annie?'

"Wid that I slipped my arm round her waist, for, begad, I fancied she had surrindered at discretion, an' the honours av war were mine.

"'Fwhat nonsinse is this?' sez she, dhrawin' hersilf up on the tips av her dear little toes. 'Wid the mother's milk not dhry on your impident mouth? Let go!' she sez.

"'Did ye not say just now that I was flesh and blood?' sez I. 'I have not changed since,' I sez; an' I kep' my arm where ut was.

"'Your arms to yoursilf!' sez she, an' her eyes sparkild.

"'Sure, 'tis only human nature,' sez I, an' I kep' my arm where ut was.

"'Nature or no nature,' sez she, 'you take your arm away or I'll tell Bragin, an' he'll alter the nature av your head. Fwhat d'you take me for?' she sez.

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"'A woman,' sez I; 'the prettiest in barricks.'

"'A *wife*,' sez she; 'the straightest in cantonments!'

"Wid that I dropped my arm, fell back tu paces, an' saluted, for I saw that she mint fwhat she said."

"Then you know something that some men would give a good deal to be certain of. How could you tell?" I demanded in the interests of Science.

"Watch the hand," said Mulvaney; "av she shuts her hand tight, thumb down over the knuckle, take up your hat an' go. You'll only make a fool av yoursilf av you shtay. But av the hand lies opin on the lap, or av you see her thryin' to shut ut, an' she can't — go on! She's not past reasonin' wid.

"Well, as I was sayin', I fell back, saluted, an' was goin' away.

"'Shtay wid me,' she sez. 'Look! He's comin' again.'

"She pointed to the verandah, an' by the Hoight av Impart'nince, the Corp'ril man was comin' out av Bragin's quarters.

"'He's done that these five evenin's past,' sez Annie Bragin. 'Oh, fwhat will I do!'

"'He'll not do ut again,' sez I, for I was fightin' mad.

"Kape away from a man that has been a thrifle

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crossed in love till the fever's died down. He rages like a brute baste.

"I wint up to the man in the verandah, manin', as sure as I sit, to knock the life out av him. He slipped into the opin. 'Fwhat are you doin' philanderin' about here, ye scum av the gutter?' sez I polite, to give him his warnin', for I wanted him ready.

"He niver lifted his head, but sez, all mournful an' melancolius, as if he thought I wud be sorry for him: 'I can't find her,' sez he.

"'My troth,' sez I, 'you've lived too long — you an' your seekin's an' findin's in a dacint married woman's quarters! Hould up your head, ye frozen thief av Genesis,' sez I, 'an' you'll find all you want an' more!'

"But he niver hild up, an' I let go from the shoulther to where the hair is short over the eyebrows.

"'That'll do your business,' sez I, but ut nearly did mine instid. I put my bodyweight behind the blow, but I hit nothing at all, an' near put my shoulther out. The Corp'ril man was not there, an' Annie Bragin, who had been watchin' from the verandah, throws up her heels, an' carries on like a cock whin his neck's wrung by the dhrummer-bhoy. I wint back to her, for a livin' woman, an' a woman like Annie Bragin, is more than a p'rade-groun' full av ghosts. I'd niver seen a

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woman faint before, an' I stud like a shtuck calf, askin' her whether she was dead, an' prayin' her for the love av me, an' the love av her husband, an' the love av the Virgin, to opin her blessed eyes again, an' callin' mesilf all the names undher the canopy av Hivin for plaguin' her wid my miserable *a-moors* whin I ought to ha' stud betune her an' this Corp'ril man that had lost the number av his mess.

"I misremimber fwhat nonsinse I said, but I was not so far gone that I cud not hear a fut on the dirt outside. 'Twas Bragin comin' in, an' by the same token Annie was comin' to. I jumped to the far end av the verandah, an' looked as if butter wudn't melt in my mouth. But Mrs. Quinn, the Quarter-Master's wife that was, had tould Bragin about my hangin' round Annie.

"'I'm not pleased wid you, Mulvaney,' sez Bragin, unbucklin' his sword, for he had been on duty.

"'That's bad hearin',' I sez, an' I knew that the pickets were dhriven in. 'What for, Sargint?' sez I.

"'Come outside,' sez he, 'an' I'll show you why.'

"'I'm willin',' I sez; 'but my stripes are none so ould that I can afford to lose thim. Tell me now, *who* do I go out wid?' sez I.

"He was a quick man an' a just, an' saw fwhat

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I wud be afther. 'Wid Mrs. Bragin's husband.' sez he. He might ha' known by me askin' that favour that I had done him no wrong.

"We wint to the back av the arsenal an' I stripped to him, an' for ten minutes 'twas all I cud do to prevent him killin' himself against my fistes. He was mad as a dumb dog—just frothing wid rage; but he had no chanst wid me in reach, or learnin', or anything else.

"'Will ye hear reason?' sez I, whin his first wind was run out.

"'Not whoile I can see,' sez he. Wid that I gave him both, one after the other, smash through the low gyard that he'd been taught whin he was a boy, an' the eyebrow shut down on the cheek-bone like the wing av a sick crow.

"'Will you hear reason now, ye brave man?' sez I.

"'Not whoile I can speak,' sez he, staggerin' up blind as a stump. I was loath to do ut, but I wint round an' swung into the jaw side-on an' shifted ut a half pace to the lef'.

"'Will ye hear reason now?' sez I; 'I can't keep my timper much longer, an' 'tis like I will hurt you.'

"'Not whoile I can stand,' he mumbles out av one corner av his mouth. So I closed an' threw him—blind, dumb, an' sick, an' jammed the jaw straight.

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"'You're an ould fool, *Mister* Bragin,' sez I.

"'You're a young thief,' sez he, 'an you've bruk my heart, you an' Annie betune you!'

"Thin he began cryin' like a child as he lay. I was sorry as I had niver been before. 'Tis an awful thing to see a strong man cry.

"'I'll swear on the Cross!' sez I.

"'I care for none av your oaths,' sez he.

"'Come back to your quarters,' sez I, 'an' if you don't believe the livin', begad, you shall listen to the dead,' I sez.

"I hoisted him an' tuk him back to his quarters. 'Mrs. Bragin,' sez I, 'here's a man that you can cure quicker than me.'

"'You've shamed me before my wife,' he whimpers.

"'Have I so?' sez I. 'By the look on Mrs. Bragin's face I think I'm for a dhressin'-down worse than I gave you.'

"An' I was! Annie Bragin was woild wid indignation. There was not a name that a dacint woman cud use that was not given my way. I've had my Colonel walk roun' me like a cooper roun' a cask for fifteen minuts in Ord'ly Room, bekaze I wint into the Corner Shop an unstrapped lewnatic; but all that I iver tuk from his rasp av a tongue was ginger-pop to fwhat Annie tould me. An' that, mark you, is the way av a woman.

"Whin ut was done for want av breath, an'

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Annie was bendin' over her husband, I sez: 'Tis all thrue, an' I'm a blayguard an' you're an honest woman; but will you tell him of wan service that I did you?'

"As I finished speakin' the Corp'ril man came up to the verandah, an' Annie Bragin shquealed. The moon was up, an' we cud see his face.

"'I can't find her,' sez the Corp'ril man, an' wint out like the puff av a candle.

"'Saints stand betune us an' evil!' sez Bragin, crossin' himself; 'that's Flahy av the Tyrone.'

"'Who was he?' I sez, 'for he has given me a dale av fightin' this day.'

"Bragin tould us that Flahy was a Corp'ril who lost his wife av cholera in those quarters three years gone, an' wint mad, an' *walked* afther they buried him, huntin' for her.

"'Well,' sez I to Bragin, 'he's been hookin out av Purgathory to kape company wid Mrs. Bragin ivry evenin' for the last fortnight. You may tell Mrs. Quinn, wid my love, for I know that she's been talkin' to you, an' you've been listenin', that she ought to ondherstand the differ 'twixt a man an' a ghost. She's had three husbands,' sez I, 'an' *you've* got a wife too good for you. Instid av which you lave her to be boddered by ghosts an'—an' all manner av evil spirruts. I'll niver go talkin' in the way av poitleness to a man's wife again. Good-night to you

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both,' sez I, an' wid that I wint away, havin' fought wid woman, man and divil all in the heart av an hour. By the same token, I gave Father Victor wan rupee to say a mass for Flahy's soul, me havin' discommoded him by shticking my fist into his systim."

"Your ideas of politeness seem rather large, Mulvaney," I said.

"That's as you look at ut," said Mulvaney calmly; "Annie Bragin niver cared for me. For all that, I did not want to leave anything behin' me that Bragin could take hould av to be angry wid her about — whin an honust wurrd cud ha' cleared all up. There's nothing like opin-speakin'. Orth'ris, ye scutt, let me put me oi to that bottle, for my throat's as dhry as whin I thought I wud get a kiss from Annie Bragin. An' that's fourteen years gone! Eyah! Cork's own city an' the blue sky above ut — an' the times that was — the times that was!"

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THE COURTING OF DINAH SHADD

What did the colonel's lady think?
Nobody never knew.
Somebody asked the sergeant's wife
An' she told 'em true.
When you git to a man in the case
They're like a row o' pins,
For the colonel's lady an' Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins.

Barrack-Room Ballad.

All day I had followed at the heels of a pursuing army engaged on one of the finest battles that ever camp of exercise beheld. Thirty thousand troops had by the wisdom of the Government of India been turned loose over a few thousand square miles of country to practise in peace what they would never attempt in war. Consequently cavalry charged unshaken infantry at the trot. Infantry captured artillery by frontal attacks delivered in line of quarter columns, and mounted infantry skirmished up to the wheels of an armoured train which carried nothing more deadly than a twenty-five pounder Armstrong, two Nordenfeldts, and a few score volunteers all cased in

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three-eighths-inch boiler-plate. Yet it was a very life-like camp. Operations did not cease at sundown; nobody knew the country and nobody spared man or horse. There was unending cavalry scouting and almost unending forced work over broken ground. The Army of the South had finally pierced the centre of the Army of the North, and was pouring through the gap hot-foot to capture a city of strategic importance. Its front extended fanwise, the sticks being represented by regiments strung out along the line of route backwards to the divisional transport columns and all the lumber that trails behind an army on the move. On its right the broken left of the Army of the North was flying in mass, chased by the Southern horse and hammered by the Southern guns till these had been pushed far beyond the limits of their last support. Then the flying sat down to rest, while the elated commandant of the pursuing force telegraphed that he held all in check and observation.

Unluckily he did not observe that three miles to his right flank a flying column of Northern horse with a detachment of Ghoorkhas and British troops had been pushed round, as fast as the failing light allowed, to cut across the entire rear of the Southern Army, to break, as it were, all the ribs of the fan where they converged by striking at the transport, reserve ammunition, and artillery

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supplies. Their instructions were to go in, avoiding the few scouts who might not have been drawn off by the pursuit, and create sufficient excitement to impress the Southern Army with the wisdom of guarding their own flank and rear before they captured cities. It was a pretty manœuvre, neatly carried out.

Speaking for the second division of the Southern Army, our first intimation of the attack was at twilight, when the artillery were labouring in deep sand, most of the escort were trying to help them out, and the main body of the infantry had gone on. A Noah's Ark of elephants, camels, and the mixed menagerie of an Indian transport-train bubbled and squealed behind the guns, when there appeared from nowhere in particular British infantry to the extent of three companies, who sprang to the heads of the gun-horses and brought all to a standstill amid oaths and cheers.

"How's that, umpire?" said the major commanding the attack, and with one voice the drivers and limber gunners answered "Hout!" while the colonel of artillery sputtered.

"All your scouts are charging our main body," said the major. "Your flanks are unprotected for two miles. I think we've broken the back of this division. And listen—there go the Ghoorkhas!"

A weak fire broke from the rear-guard more than a mile away, and was answered by cheerful

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howlings. The Ghoorkhas, who should have swung clear of the second division, had stepped on its tail in the dark, but, drawing off, hastened to reach the next line of attack, which lay almost parallel to us five or six miles away.

Our column swayed and surged irresolutely — three batteries, the divisional ammunition reserve, the baggage, and a section of the hospital and bearer corps. The commandant ruefully promised to report himself "cut up" to the nearest umpire, and commending his cavalry and all other cavalry to the special care of Eblis, toiled on to resume touch with the rest of the division.

"We'll bivouac here to-night," said the major, "I have a notion that the Ghoorkhas will get caught. They may want us to re-form on. Stand easy till the transport gets away."

A hand caught my beast's bridle and led him out of the choking dust; a larger hand deftly canted me out of the saddle; and two of the hugest hands in the world received me sliding. Pleasant is the lot of the special correspondent who falls into such hands as those of Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd.

"An' that's all right," said the Irishman calmly. "We thought we'd find you somewheres here by. Is there anything av yours in the transport? Orth'ris 'll fetch ut out."

Ortheris did "fetch ut out," from under the

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trunk of an elephant, in the shape of a servant and an animal both laden with medical comforts. The little man's eyes sparkled.

"If the brutil an' licentious soldiery av these parts gets sight av the thruck," said Mulvaney, making practised investigation, "they'll loot iv'rything. They're bein' fed on iron-filin's an' dog-biscuit these days, but glory's no compensation for a belly-ache. Praise be, we're here to protect you, Sorr. Beer, sausage, bread (soft, an' that's a cur'osity), soup in a tin, whisky by the smell av ut, an' fowls! Mother av Moses, but ye take the field like a confectioner! 'Tis scand'lus."

"'Ere's a orficer," said Ortheris significantly. "When the sergent's done lushin' the privit may clean the pot."

I bundled several things into Mulvaney's haversack before the major's hand fell on my shoulder and he said tenderly, "Requisitioned for the Queen's service. Wolseley was quite wrong about special correspondents: they are the soldier's best friends. Come and take pot-luck with us to-night."

And so it happened amid laughter and shoutings that my well-considered commissariat melted away to reappear later at the mess-table, which was a waterproof sheet spread on the ground. The flying column had taken three days' rations with it, and there be few things nastier than govern-

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ment rations — especially when government is experimenting with German toys. Erbsenwurst, tinned beef of surpassing tinniness, compressed vegetables, and meat-biscuits may be nourishing, but what Thomas Atkins needs is bulk in his inside. The major, assisted by his brother officers, purchased goats for the camp and so made the experiment of no effect. Long before the fatigue-party sent to collect brushwood had returned, the men were settled down by their valises, kettles and pots had appeared from the surrounding country and were dangling over fires as the kid and the compressed vegetable bubbled together; there rose a cheerful clinking of mess-tins; outrageous demands for "a little more stuffin' with that there liver-wing;" and gust on gust of chaff as pointed as a bayonet and as delicate as a gun-butt.

"The boys are in a good temper," said the major. "They'll be singing presently. Well, a night like this is enough to keep them happy."

Over our heads burned the wonderful Indian stars, which are not all pricked in on one plane, but, preserving an orderly perspective, draw the eye through the velvet darkness of the void up to the barred doors of heaven itself. The earth was a gray shadow more unreal than the sky. We could hear her breathing lightly in the pauses between the howling of the jackals, the movement of the wind in the tamarisks, and the fitful mutter

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of musketry-fire leagues away to the left. A native woman from some unseen hut began to sing, the mail-train thundered past on its way to Delhi, and a roosting crow cawed drowsily. Then there was a belt-loosening silence about the fires, and the even breathing of the crowded earth took up the story.

The men, full fed, turned to tobacco and song—their officers with them. The subaltern is happy who can win the approval of the musical critics in his regiment, and is honoured among the more intricate step-dancers. By him, as by him who plays cricket cleverly, Thomas Atkins will stand in time of need, when he will let a better officer go on alone. The ruined tombs of forgotten Mussulman saints heard the ballad of "Agra Town," "The Buffalo Battery," "Marching to Kabul," "The long, long Indian Day," "The Place where the Punkah-coolie died," and that crashing chorus which announces,

> Youth's daring spirit, manhood's fire,
> Firm hand and eagle eye,
> Must he acquire who would aspire
> To see the gray boar die.

To-day, of all those jovial thieves who appropriated my commissariat and lay and laughed round that waterproof sheet, not one remains.

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They went to camps that were not of exercise and battles without umpires. Burma, the Soudan, and the frontier,—fever and fight,—took them in their time.

I drifted across to the men's fires in search of Mulvaney, whom I found strategically greasing his feet by the blaze. There is nothing particularly lovely in the sight of a private thus engaged after a long day's march, but when you reflect on the exact proportion of the "might, majesty, dominion, and power" of the British Empire which stands on those feet you take an interest in the proceedings.

"There's a blister, bad luck to ut, on the heel," said Mulvaney. "I can't touch ut. Prick ut out, little man."

Ortheris took out his house-wife, eased the trouble with a needle, stabbed Mulvaney in the calf with the same weapon, and was swiftly kicked into the fire.

"I've bruk the best av my toes over you, ye grinnin' child av disruption," said Mulvaney, sitting cross-legged and nursing his feet; then seeing me, "Oh, ut's you, Sorr! Be welkim, an' take that maraudin' scutt's place. Jock, hold him down on the cindhers for a bit."

But Ortheris escaped and went elsewhere, as I took possession of the hollow he had scraped for himself and lined with his greatcoat. Learoyd on

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the other side of the fire grinned affably and in a minute fell fast asleep.

"There's the height av politeness for you," said Mulvaney, lighting his pipe with a flaming branch. "But Jock's eaten half a box av your sardines at wan gulp, an' I think the tin too. What's the best wid you, Sorr, an' how did you happen to be on the losin' side this day whin we captured you?"

"The Army of the South is winning all along the line," I said.

"Then that line's the hangman's rope, savin' your presence. You'll learn to-morrow how we rethreated to dhraw thim on before we made thim trouble, an' that's what a woman does. By the same tokin, we'll be attacked before the dawnin', an' ut would be betther not to slip your boots. How do I know that? By the light av pure reason. Here are three companies av us ever so far inside av the enemy's flank, an' a crowd av roarin', tarin', squealin' cavalry gone on just to turn out the whole hornet's nest av them. Av coorse the enemy will pursue, by brigades like as not, an' thin we'll have to run for ut. Mark my words. I am av the opinion av Polonius whin he said, 'Don't fight wid ivry scutt for the pure joy av fightin', but if you do, knock the nose av him first an' frequint.' We ought to ha' gone on an' helped the Ghoorkhas."

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"But what do you know about Polonius?" I demanded. This was a new side of Mulvaney's character.

"All that Shakespeare iver wrote an' a dale more that the gallery shouted," said the man of war, carefully lacing his boots. "Did I not tell you av Silver's theatre in Dublin, whin I was younger than I am now an' a patron av the drama? Ould Silver wud never pay actor-man or woman their just dues, an' by consequince his comp'nies was collapsible at the last minut. Thin the bhoys wud clamour to take a part, an' oft as not ould Silver made them pay for the fun. Faith, I've seen Hamlut played wid a new black eye an' the queen as full as a cornucopia. I remimber wanst Hogin that 'listed in the Black Tyrone an' was shot in South Africa, he sejuced ould Silver into givin' him Hamlut's part instid av me that had a fine fancy for rhetoric in those days. Av coorse I wint into the gallery an' began to fill the pit wid other people's hats, an' I passed the time av day to Hogin walkin' through Denmark like a hamstrung mule wid a pall on his back. 'Hamlut,' sez I, 'there's a hole in your heel. Pull up your shtockin's, Hamlut,' sez I. 'Hamlut, Hamlut, for the love av dacincy dhrop that skull an' pull up your shtockin's.' The whole house begun to tell him that. He stopped his soliloquishms mid-between. 'My shtockin's may

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be comin' down or they may not,' sez he, screwin' his eye into the gallery, for well he knew who I was. 'But afther this performince is over me an' the Ghost 'll trample the tripes out av you, Terence, wid your ass's bray!' An' that's how I come to know about Hamlut. Eyah! Those days, those days! Did you iver have onendin' divilment an' nothin' to pay for ut in your life, Sorr?"

"Never, without having to pay," I said.

"That's thrue! 'Tis mane whin you considher on ut; but ut's the same wid horse or fut. A headache if you dhrink, an' a belly-ache if you eat too much, an' a heartache to kape all down. Faith, the baste only gets the colic, an' he's the lucky man."

He dropped his head and stared into the fire, fingering his moustache the while. From the far side of the bivouac the voice of Corbet-Nolan, senior subaltern of B Company, uplifted itself in an ancient and much appreciated song of sentiment, the men moaning melodiously behind him.

> The north wind blew coldly, she drooped from that hour,
> My own little Kathleen, my sweet little Kathleen,
> Kathleen, my Kathleen, Kathleen O'Moore!

With forty-five O's in the last word: even at that distance you might have cut the soft South Irish accent with a shovel.

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"For all we take we must pay, but the price is cruel high," murmured Mulvaney when the chorus had ceased.

"What's the trouble?" I said gently, for I knew that he was a man of an inextinguishable sorrow.

"Hear now," said he. "Ye know what I am now. *I* know what I mint to be at the beginnin' av my service. I've tould you time an' again, an' what I have not Dinah Shadd has. An' what am I? Oh, Mary Mother av Hiven, an ould dhrunken, untrustable baste av a privit that has seen the reg'-ment change out from colonel to drummer-boy, not wanst or twice, but scores av times! Ay, scores! An' me not so near gettin' promotion as in the first! An' me livin' on an' kapin' clear av clink, not by my own good conduck, but the kind-ness av some orf'cer-bhoy young enough to be son to me! Do I not know ut? Can I not tell whin I'm passed over at p'rade, tho' I'm rockin' full av liquor an' ready to fall all in wan piece, such as even a suckin' child might see, bekaze, 'Oh, 'tis only ould Mulvaney!' An' whin I'm let off in ord'ly-room through some thrick of the tongue an' a ready answer an' the ould man's mercy, is ut smilin' I feel whin I fall away an' go back to Dinah Shadd, thryin' to carry ut all off as a joke? Not I! 'Tis hell to me, dumb hell through ut all; an' next time whin the fit comes I will be as bad again. Good cause the reg'mint has to know

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me for the best soldier in ut. Better cause have I to know mesilf for the worst man. I'm only fit to tache the new drafts what I'll niver learn mesilf; an' I am sure, as tho' I heard ut, that the minut wan av these pink-eyed recruities gets away from my 'Mind ye now,' an 'Listen to this, Jim, bhoy,' — sure I am that the sargint houlds me up to him for a warnin'. So I tache, as they say at musketry instruction, by direct and ricochet fire. Lord be good to me, for I have stud some throuble!"

"Lie down and go to sleep," said I, not being able to comfort or advise. "You're the best man in the regiment, and, next to Ortheris, the biggest fool. Lie down and wait till we're attacked. What force will they turn out? Guns, think you?"

"Try that wid your lorrds an' ladies, twistin' an' turnin' the talk, tho' you mint ut well. Ye cud say nothin' to help me, an' yet ye niver knew what cause I had to be what I am."

"Begin at the beginning and go on to the end," I said royally. "But rake up the fire a bit, first."

I passed Ortheris's bayonet for a poker.

"That shows how little we know what we do," said Mulvaney, putting it aside. "Fire takes all the heart out av the steel, an' the next time, maybe, that our little man is fighting for his life his bradawl 'll break, an' so you'll ha' killed him, manin' no more than to kape yourself warm. 'Tis

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a recruity's thrick that. Pass the clanin'-rod, Sorr."

I snuggled down abased; and after an interval the voice of Mulvaney began.

"Did I iver tell you how Dinah Shadd came to be wife av mine?"

I dissembled a burning anxiety that I had felt for some months — ever since Dinah Shadd, the strong, the patient, and the infinitely tender, had of her own good love and free will washed a shirt for me, moving in a barren land where washing was not.

"I can't remember," I said casually. "Was it before or after you made love to Annie Bragin, and got no satisfaction?"

The story of Annie Bragin is written in another place. It is one of the many less respectable episodes in Mulvaney's chequered career.

"Before — before — long before, was that business av Annie Bragin an' the corp'ril's ghost. Niver woman was the worse for me whin I had married Dinah. There's a time for all things, an' I know how to kape all things in place — barrin' the dhrink, that kapes me in my place wid no hope av comin' to be aught else."

"Begin at the beginning," I insisted. "Mrs. Mulvaney told me that you married her when you were quartered in Krab Bokhar barracks."

"An' the same is a cess-pit," said Mulvaney

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"'Twud be better for you if ut were,' sez ould Mother Shadd, an' she had ought to know, for Shadd, in the ind av his service, dhrank bung-full each night.

"Wid that I tuk off my gloves — there was pipe-clay in thim, so that they stud alone — an' pulled up my chair, lookin' round at the china ornaments an' bits av things in the Shadds' quarters. They were things that belonged to a man, an' no camp-kit, here to-day an' dishipated next. 'You're comfortable in this place, sargint,' sez I. 'Tis the wife that did ut, boy,' sez he, pointin' the stem av his pipe to ould Mother Shadd, an' she smacked the top av his bald head upon the compliment. 'That manes you want money,' sez she.

"An' thin — an' thin whin the kettle was to be filled, Dinah came in — my Dinah — her sleeves rowled up to the elbow an' her hair in a winkin' glory over her forehead, the big blue eyes beneath twinklin' like stars on a frosty night, an' the tread av her two feet lighter than waste-paper from the colonel's basket in ord'ly-room whin ut's emptied. Bein' but a shlip av a girl, she went pink at seein' me, an' I twisted me moustache an' looked at a picture forninst the wall. Niver show a woman that ye care the snap av a finger for her, an' begad she'll come bleatin' to your boot-heels!"

"I suppose that's why you followed Annie

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Bragin till everybody in the married quarters laughed at you," said I, remembering that unhallowed wooing and casting off the disguise of drowsiness.

"I'm layin' down the gin'ral theory av the attack," said Mulvaney, driving his boot into the dying fire. "If you read the 'Soldier's Pocket Book,' which niver any soldier reads, you'll see that there are exceptions. Whin Dinah was out av the door (an' 'twas as tho' the sunlight had shut too)—'Mother av Hiven, sargint,' sez I, 'but is that your daughter?'—'I've believed that way these eighteen years,' sez ould Shadd, his eyes twinklin'; 'but Mrs. Shadd has her own opinion, like iv'ry woman.'—''Tis wid yours this time, for a mericle,' sez Mother Shadd. 'Thin why in the name av fortune did I niver see her before?' sez I. 'Bekaze you've been thrapesin' round wid the married women these three years past. She was a bit av a child till last year, an' she shot up wid the spring,' sez ould Mother Shadd. 'I'll thrapese no more,' sez I. 'D'you mane that?' sez ould Mother Shadd, lookin' at me sideways like a hen looks at a hawk whin the chickens are runnin' free. 'Try me, an' tell,' sez I. Wid that I pulled on my gloves, dhrank off the tay, an' wint out av the house as stiff as at gin'ral p'rade, for well I knew that Dinah Shadd's eyes were in the small av my back out av the

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scullery window. Faith! that was the only time I mourned I was not a cav'lry man for the pride av the spurs to jingle.

"I wint out to think, an' I did a powerful lot av thinkin', but ut all came round to that shlip av a girl in the dotted blue dhress, wid the blue eyes an' the sparkil in them. Thin I kept off canteen, an' I kept to the married quarthers, or near by, on the chanst av meetin' Dinah. Did I meet her? Oh, my time past, did I not; wid a lump in my throat as big as my valise an' my heart goin' like a farrier's forge on a Saturday morning? 'Twas 'Good day to ye, Miss Dinah,' an' 'Good day t'you, corp'ril,' for a week or two, and divil a bit further could I get bekaze av the respect I had to that girl that I cud ha' broken betune finger an' thumb."

Here I giggled as I recalled the gigantic figure of Dinah Shadd when she handed me my shirt.

"Ye may laugh," grunted Mulvaney. "But I'm speakin' the trut', an' 'tis you that are in fault. Dinah was a girl that wud ha' taken the imperiousness out av the Duchess av Clonmel in those days. Flower hand, foot av shod air, an' the eyes av the livin' mornin' she had that is my wife to-day — ould Dinah, and niver aught else than Dinah Shadd to me.

"'Twas after three weeks standin' off an' on, an' niver makin' headway excipt through the eyes,

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that a little drummer-boy grinned in me face whin I had admonished him wid the buckle av my belt for riotin' all over the place. 'An' I'm not the only wan that doesn't kape to barricks,' sez he. I tuk him by the scruff av his neck,—my heart was hung on a hair-thrigger those days, you will onderstand,—an' 'Out wid ut,' sez I, 'or I'll lave no bone av you unbreakable.'—'Speak to Dempsey,' sez he, howlin'. 'Dempsey which?' sez I, 'ye unwashed limb av Satan.'—'Av the Bob-tailed Dhragoons,' sez he. 'He's seen her home from her aunt's house in the civil lines four times this fortnight.'—'Child!' sez I, dhroppin' him, 'your tongue's stronger than your body. Go to your quarters. I'm sorry I dhressed you down.'

"At that I went four ways to wanst huntin' Dempsey. I was mad to think that wid all my airs among women I shud ha' been chated by a basin-faced fool av a cav'lry-man not fit to trust on a trunk. Presintly I found him in our lines —the Bobtails was quartered next us—an' a tallowy, topheavy son av a she-mule he was, wid his big brass spurs an' his plastrons on his epigastrons an' all. But he niver flinched a hair.

"'A word wid you, Dempsey,' sez I. 'You've walked wid Dinah Shadd four times this fortnight gone.'

"'What's that to you?' sez he. 'I'll walk

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forty times more, an' forty on top av that, ye shovel-futted clod-breakin' infantry lance-corp'ril.'

"Before I cud gyard he had his gloved fist home on my cheek, an' down I went full-sprawl. 'Will that content you?' sez he, blowin' on his knuckles for all the world like a Scots Greys orf'cer. 'Content!' sez I. 'For your own sake, man, take off your spurs, peel your jackut, an' onglove. 'Tis the beginnin' av the overture; stand up!'

"He stud all he know, but he niver peeled his jacket, an' his shoulders had no fair play. I was fightin' for Dinah Shadd an' that cut on my cheek. What hope had he forninst me? 'Stand up,' sez I, time an' again whin he was beginnin' to quarter the ground an' gyard high an' go large. 'This isn't ridin'-school,' I sez. 'O man, stand up an' let me get in at ye.' But whin I saw he wud be runnin' about, I grup his shtock in my left an' his waist-belt in my right an' swung him clear to my right front, head undher, he hammerin' my nose till the wind was knocked out av him on the bare ground. 'Stand up,' sez I, 'or I'll kick your head into your chest!' and I wud ha' done ut too, so ragin' mad I was.

"'My collar-bone's bruk,' sez he. 'Help me back to lines. I'll walk wid her no more.' So I helped him back."

"And was his collar-bone broken?" I asked,

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for I fancied that only Learoyd could neatly accomplish that terrible throw.

"He pitched on his left shoulder-point. Ut was. Next day the news was in both barricks, an' whin I met Dinah Shadd wid a cheek on me like all the reg'mintal tailor's samples there was no 'Good mornin', corp'ril,' or aught else. 'An' what have I done, Miss Shadd,' sez I, very bould, plantin' mesilf forninst her, 'that ye should not pass the time of day?'

"'Ye've half-killed rough-rider Dempsey,' sez she, her dear blue eyes fillin' up.

"'Maybe,' sez I. 'Was he a friend av yours that saw ye home four times in the fortnight?'

"'Yes,' sez she, but her mouth was down at the corners. 'An'—an' what's that to you?' she sez.

"'Ask Dempsey,' sez I, purtendin' to go away.

"'Did you fight for me then, ye silly man?' she sez, tho' she knew ut all along.

"'Who else?' sez I, an' I tuk wan pace to the front.

"'I wasn't worth ut,' sez she, fingerin' in her apron.

"'That's for me to say,' sez I. 'Shall I say ut?'

"'Yes,' sez she in a saint's whisper, an' at that I explained mesilf; and she tould me what ivry man that is a man, an' many that is a woman, hears wanst in his life.

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"'But what made ye cry at startin', Dinah darlin'?' sez I.

"'Your — your bloody cheek,' sez she, duckin' her little head down on my sash (I was on duty for the day) an' whimperin' like a sorrowful angil.

"Now a man cud take that two ways. I tuk ut as pleased me best an' my first kiss wid ut. Mother av Innocence! but I kissed her on the tip av the nose an' undher the eye; an' a girl that lets a kiss come tumbleways like that has never been kissed before. Take note av that, Sorr. Thin we wint hand in hand to ould Mother Shadd like two little childher, an' she said 'twas no bad thing, an' ould Shadd nodded behind his pipe, an' Dinah ran away to her own room. That day I throd on rollin' clouds. All earth was too small to hould me. Begad, I cud ha' hiked the sun out av the sky for a live coal to my pipe, so magnificent I was. But I tuk recruities at squad-drill instid, an' began wid general battalion advance whin I shud ha' been balance-steppin' them. Eyah! that day! that day!"

A very long pause. "Well?" said I.

"'Twas all wrong," said Mulvaney, with an enormous sigh. "An' I know that ivry bit av ut was my own foolishness. That night I tuk maybe the half av three pints — not enough to turn the hair of a man in his natural senses. But I was more than half dhrunk wid pure joy, an' that can-

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teen beer was so much whisky to me. I can't tell how it came about, but *bekaze* I had no thought for any wan except Dinah, *bekaze* I hadn't slipped her little white arms from my neck five minuts, *bekaze* the breath of her kiss was not gone from my mouth, I must go through the married lines on my way to quarters, an' I must stay talkin' to a red-headed Mullingar heifer av a girl, Judy Sheehy, that was daughter to Mother Sheehy, the wife of Nick Sheehy, the canteen-sargint — the Black Curse av Shielygh be on the whole brood that are above groun' this day!

"'An' what are ye houldin' your head that high for, corp'ril?' sez Judy. 'Come in an' thry a cup av tay,' she sez, standin' in the doorway. Bein' an ontrustable fool, an' thinkin' av anything but tay, I wint.

"'Mother's at canteen,' sez Judy, smoothin' the hair av hers that was like red snakes, an' lookin' at me cornerways out av her green cats' eyes. 'Ye will not mind, corp'ril?'

"'I can endure,' sez I; ould Mother Sheehy bein' no divarsion av mine, nor her daughter too. Judy fetched the tea things an' put thim on the table, leanin' over me very close to get thim square. I dhrew back, thinkin' av Dinah.

"'Is ut afraid you are av a girl alone?' sez Judy.

"'No,' sez I. 'Why should I be?'

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"'That rests wid the girl,' sez Judy, dhrawin' her chair next to mine.

"'Thin there let ut rest,' sez I; an' thinkin' I'd been a trifle onpolite, I sez, 'The tay's not quite sweet enough for my taste. Put your little finger in the cup, Judy. 'Twill make ut necthar.'

"'What's necthar?' sez she.

"'Somethin' very sweet,' sez I; an' for the sinful life av me I cud not help lookin' at her out av the corner av my eye, as I was used to look at a woman.

"'Go on wid ye, corp'ril,' sez she. 'You're a flirrt.'

"'On me sowl I'm not,' sez I.

"'Then you're a cruel handsome man, an' that's worse,' sez she, heaving big sighs an' lookin' crossways.

"'You know your own mind,' sez I.

"''Twud be better for me if I did not,' she sez.

"'There's a dale to be said on both sides av that,' sez I, unthinkin'.

"'Say your own part av ut, then, Terence darlin',' sez she; 'for begad I'm thinkin' I've said too much or too little for an honest girl,' an' wid that she put her arms round my neck an' kissed me.

"'There's no more to be said afther that,' sez I, kissin' her back again — Oh the mane scutt that I was, my head ringin' wid Dinah Shadd! How does ut come about, Sorr, that whin a man has

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put the comether on wan woman, he's sure bound to put it on another? 'Tis the same thing at musketry. Wan day ivry shot goes wide or into the bank, an' the next, lay high lay low, sight or snap, ye can't get off the bull's-eye for ten shots runnin'."

"That only happens to a man who has had a good deal of experience. He does it without thinking," I replied.

"Thankin' you for the complimint, Sorr, ut may be so. But I'm doubtful whether you mint ut for a complimint. Hear now; I sat there wid Judy on my knee tellin' me all manner av nonsinse an' only sayin' 'yes' an' 'no,' when I'd much better ha' kept tongue betune teeth. An' that was not an hour afther I had left Dinah! What I was thinkin' av I cannot say. Presintly, quiet as a cat, ould Mother Sheehy came in velvet-dhrunk. She had her daughter's red hair, but 'twas bald in patches, an' I cud see in her wicked ould face, clear as lightnin', what Judy wud be twenty years to come. I was for jumpin' up, but Judy niver moved.

"'Terence has promust, mother,' sez she, an' the could sweat bruk out all over me. Ould Mother Sheehy sat down of a heap an' began playin' wid the cups. 'Thin you're a well-matched pair,' she sez very thick. 'For he's the biggest rogue that iver spoiled the Queen's shoe-leather, an'——'

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"'I'm off, Judy,' sez I. 'Ye should not talk nonsinse to your mother. Get her to bed, girl.'

"'Nonsinse!' sez the ould woman, prickin' up her ears like a cat an' grippin' the table-edge. ''Twill be the most nonsinsical nonsinse for you, ye grinnin' badger, if nonsinse 'tis. Get clear, you. I'm goin' to bed.'

"I ran out into the dhark, my head in a stew an' my heart sick, but I had sinse enough to see that I'd brought ut all on mysilf. 'It's this to pass the time av day to a panjandhrum av hell-cats,' sez I. 'What I've said an' what I've not said do not matther. Judy an' her dam will hould me for a promust man, an' Dinah will give me the go, an' I desarve ut. I will go an' get dhrunk,' sez I, 'an' forget about ut, for 'tis plain I'm not a marrin' man.'

"On my way to canteen I ran against Lascelles, colour-sergeant that was av E Comp'ny, a hard, hard man, wid a torment av a wife. 'You've the head av a drowned man on your shoulders,' sez he; 'an' you're goin' where you'll get a worse wan. Come back,' sez he. 'Let me go,' sez I. 'I've thrown my luck over the wall wid my own hand!'—'Thin that's not the way to get ut back again,' sez he. 'Have out wid your throuble, ye fool-bhoy.' An' I tould him how the matther was.

"He sucked in his lower lip. 'You've been

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thrapped,' sez he. 'Ju Sheehy wud be the bether for a man's name to hers as soon as can. An' ye thought ye'd put the comether on her — that's the natural vanity of the baste. Terence, you're a big born fool, but you're not bad enough to marry into that comp'ny. If you said anythin', an' for all your protestations I'm sure ye did,— or did not, which is worse,— eat ut all — lie like the father of all lies, but come out av ut free av Judy. Do I not know what ut is to marry a woman that was the very spit an' image av Judy whin she was young? I'm gettin' old an' I've larnt patience, but you, Terence, you'd raise hand on Judy an' kill her in a year. Never mind if Dinah gives you the go, you've desarved ut; never mind if the whole reg'mint laughs you all day. Get shut av Judy an' her mother. They can't dhrag you to church, but if they do, they'll dhrag you to hell. Go back to your quarters and lie down', sez he. Thin over his shoulder, 'You *must* ha' done with thim.'

"Next day I wint to see Dinah, but there was no tucker in me as I walked. I knew the throuble wud come soon enough widout any handlin' av mine, an' I dreaded ut sore.

"I heard Judy callin' me, but I hild straight on to the Shadds' quarthers, an' Dinah wud ha' kissed me, but I put her back.

"'Whin all's said, darlin',' sez I, 'you can give

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ut me if ye will, tho' I misdoubt 'twill be so easy to come by then.'

"I had scarce begun to put the explanation into shape before Judy an' her mother came to the door. I think there was a verandah, but I'm forgettin'.

"'Will ye not step in?' sez Dinah, pretty and polite, though the Shadds had no dealin's with the Sheehys. Old Mother Shadd looked up quick, an' she was the fust to see the throuble; for Dinah was her daughter.

"'I'm pressed for time to-day,' sez Judy as bould as brass; 'an' I've only come for Terence, — my promust man. 'Tis strange to find him here the day afther the day.'

"Dinah looked at me as though I had hit her, an' I answered straight.

"'There was some nonsinse last night at the Sheehys' quarthers, an' Judy's carryin' on the joke, darlin',' sez I.

"'At the Sheehys' quarthers?' sez Dinah very slow, an' Judy cut in wid: 'He was there from nine till ten, Dinah Shadd, an' the betther half av that time I was sittin' on his knee, Dinah Shadd. Ye may look and ye may look an' ye may look me up an' down, but ye won't look away that Terence is my promust man. Terence darlin', 'tis time for us to be comin' home.'

"Dinah Shadd niver said word to Judy. 'Ye

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left me at half-past eight,' she sez to me, 'an' I niver thought that ye'd leave me for Judy,—promises or no promises. Go back wid her, you that have to be fetched by a girl! I'm done with you,' sez she, and she ran into her own room, her mother followin'. So I was alone wid those two women and at liberty to spake my sentiments.

"'Judy Sheehy,' sez I, 'if you made a fool av me betune the lights you shall not do ut in the day. I niver promised you words or lines.'

"'You lie,' sez ould Mother Sheehy, 'an' may ut choke you where you stand!' She was far gone in dhrink.

"'An' tho' ut choked me where I stud I'd not change,' sez I. 'Go home, Judy. I take shame for a dacint girl like you dhraggin' your mother out bareheaded on this errand. Hear now, and have ut for an answer. I gave my word to Dinah Shadd yesterday, an', more blame to me, I was wid you last night talkin' nonsinse, but nothin' more. You've chosen to thry to hould me on ut. I will not be held thereby for anythin' in the world. Is that enough?'

"Judy wint pink all over. 'An' I wish you joy av the perjury,' sez she, duckin' a curtsey. 'You've lost a woman that would ha' wore her hand to the bone for your pleasure; an' 'deed, Terence, ye were not thrapped. . . .' Lascelles must ha' spoken plain to her. 'I am such as

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Dinah is — 'deed I am! Ye've lost a fool av a girl that'll niver look at you again, an' ye've lost what ye niver had — your common honesty. If you manage your men as you manage your love-makin', small wondher they call you the worst corp'ril in the comp'ny. Come away, mother,' sez she.

"But divil a fut would the ould woman budge! 'D'you hould by that?' sez she, peerin' up under her thick gray eyebrows.

"'Ay, an' wud,' sez I, 'tho' Dinah give me the go twinty times. I'll have no thruck with you or yours,' sez I. 'Take your child away, ye shameless woman.'

"'An' am I shameless?' sez she, bringin' her hands up above her head. 'Thin what are you, ye lyin', schamin', weak-kneed, dhirty-souled son av a sutler? Am *I* shameless? Who put the open shame on me an' my child that we shud go beggin' through the lines in the broad daylight for the broken word of a man? Double portion of my shame be on you, Terence Mulvaney, that think yourself so strong! By Mary and the saints, by blood and water, an' by ivry sorrow that came into the world since the beginnin', the black blight fall on you and yours, so that you may niver be free from pain for another when ut's not your own! May your heart bleed in your breast drop by drop, wid all your friends laughin' at the bleedin'! Strong

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you think yourself? May your strength be a curse to you to dhrive you into the divil's hands against your own will! Clear-eyed you are? May your eyes see clear ivry step av the dark path you take till the hot cindhers av hell put thim out! May the ragin' dry thirst in my own ould bones go to you, that you shall niver pass bottle full nor glass empty. God preserve the light av your onderstandin' to you, my jewel av a bhoy, that ye may niver forget what you mint to be an' do, whin you're wallowin' in the muck! May ye see the betther and follow the worse as long as there's breath in your body; an' may ye die quick in a strange land, watchin' your death before ut takes you, an' onable to stir hand or foot!'

"I heard a scufflin' in the room behind, and thin Dinah Shadd's hand dhropped into mine like a rose-leaf into a muddy road.

"'The half av that I'll take,' sez she, 'an' more too if I can. Go home, ye silly talkin' woman — go home an' confess.'

"'Come away! Come away!' sez Judy, pullin' her mother by the shawl. ''Twas none av Terence's fault. For the love av Mary stop the talkin'!'

"'An' you!' said ould Mother Sheehy, spinnin' round forninst Dinah. 'Will ye take the half av that man's load? Stand off from him, Dinah Shadd, before he takes you down too — you that

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look to be a quarther-master-sergeant's wife in five years. You look too high, child. You shall *wash* for the quarther-master-sergeant, whin he plases to give you the job out av charity; but a privit's wife you shall be to the end, an' ivry sorrow of a privit's wife you shall know, and niver a joy but wan, that shall go from you like the running tide from a rock. The pain av bearin' you shall know but niver the pleasure av giving the breast; an' you shall put away a man-child into the common ground wid niver a priest to say a prayer over him, an' on that man-child ye shall think ivry day av your life. Think long, Dinah Shadd, for you'll niver have another, tho' you pray till your knees are bleedin'. The mothers av childher shall mock you behind your back when you're wringing over the wash-tub. You shall know what ut is to help a dhrunken husband home an' see him go to the gyard-room. Will that plase you, Dinah Shadd, that won't be seen talkin' to my daughter? You shall talk to worse than Judy before all's over. The sargints' wives shall look down on you contemptuous, daughter av a sargint, an' you shall cover ut all up wid a smiling face when your heart's burstin'. Stand off av him, Dinah Shadd, for I've put the Black Curse of Shielygh upon him, an' his own mouth shall make ut good.'

"She pitched forward on her head an' began

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foamin' at the mouth. Dinah Shadd ran out wid water, an' Judy dhragged the ould woman into the verandah till she sat up.

"'I'm ould an' forlore,' she sez, thremblin' an' cryin', 'and 'tis like I say a dale more than I mane.'

"'Whin you're able to walk,—go,' says ould Mother Shadd. 'This house has no place for the likes av you that have cursed my daughter.'

"'Eyah!' said the ould woman. 'Hard words break no bones, an' Dinah Shadd 'll kape the love av her husband till my bones are green corn. Judy darlin', I misremember what I came here for. Can you lend us the bottom av a tay-cup av tay, Mrs. Shadd?'

"But Judy dhragged her off, cryin' as tho' her heart wud break. An' Dinah Shadd an' I, in ten minuts we had forgot ut all."

"Then why do you remember it now?" said I.

"Is ut like I'd forget? Ivry word that wicked ould woman spoke fell thrue in my life aftherwards, an' I cud ha' stud ut all—stud ut all—excipt when my little Shadd was born. That was on the line av march three months afther the regimint was taken with cholera. We were betune Umballa an' Kalka thin, an' I was on picket. Whin I came off duty the women showed me the child, an' ut turned on uts side an' died as I looked. We buried him by the road, an' Father

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Victor was a day's march behind wid the heavy baggage, so the comp'ny captain read a prayer. An' since then I've been a childless man, an' all else that ould Mother Sheehy put upon me an' Dinah Shadd. What do you think, Sorr?"

I thought a good deal, but it seemed better then to reach out for Mulvaney's hand. The demonstration nearly cost me the use of three fingers. Whatever he knows of his weaknesses, Mulvaney is entirely ignorant of his strength.

"But what do you think?" he repeated, as I was straightening out the crushed fingers.

My reply was drowned in yells and outcries from the next fire, where ten men were shouting for "Orth'ris," "Privit Orth'ris," "Mistah Or—ther—ris!" "Deah boy," "Cap'n Orth'ris, "Field-Marshal Orth'ris," "Stanley, you pen'north o' pop, come 'ere to your own comp'ny!" And the cockney, who had been delighting another audience with recondite and Rabelaisian yarns, was shot down among his admirers by the major force.

"You've crumpled my dress-shirt 'orrid," said he, "an' I sha'n't sing no more to this 'ere bloomin' drawin'-room."

Learoyd, roused by the confusion, uncoiled himself, crept behind Ortheris, and slung him aloft on his shoulders.

"Sing, ye bloomin' hummin' bird!" said he, and Ortheris, beating time on Learoyd's skull, de-

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livered himself, in the raucous voice of the Ratcliffe Highway, of this song: —

My girl she give me the go onst,
When I was a London lad,
An' I went on the drink for a fortnight,
And then I went to the bad.
The Queen she give me a shillin'
To fight for 'er over the seas;
But Guv'ment built me a fever-trap,
An' Injia give me disease.

Chorus.

Ho! don't you 'eed what a girl says,
An' don't you go for the beer;
But I was an ass when I was at grass,
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

I fired a shot at a Afghan,
The beggar 'e fired again,
An' I lay on my bed with a 'ole in my 'ed,
An' missed the next campaign!
I up with my gun at a Burman
Who carried a bloomin' *dah*,
But the cartridge stuck and the bay'nit bruk,
An' all I got was the scar.

Chorus.

Ho! don't you aim at a Afghan
When you stand on the sky-line clear;
An' don't you go for a Burman
If none o' your friends is near.

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I served my time for a corp'ral,
And wetted my stripes with pop,
For I went on the bend with a intimate friend,
An' finished the night in the "shop."
I served my time for a sergeant;
The colonel 'e sez "No!
The most you'll see is a full C. B."[1]
An' . . . very next night 'twas so.

Chorus.

Ho! don't you go for a corp'ral
Unless your 'ed is clear;
But I was an ass when I was at grass,
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

I've tasted the luck o' the army
In barrack an' camp an' clink,
An' I lost my tip through the bloomin' trip
Along o' the women an' drink.
I'm down at the heel o' my service,
An' when I am laid on the shelf,
My very wust friend from beginning to end
By the blood of a mouse was myself!

Chorus.

Ho! don't you 'eed what a girl says,
An' don't you go for the beer;
But I was an ass when I was at grass,
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

"Ay, listen to our little man now, singin' an' shoutin' as tho' throuble had niver touched

[1] Confined to barracks.

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him. D' you remember when he went mad with the home-sickness?" said Mulvaney, recalling a never-to-be-forgotten season when Ortheris waded through the deep waters of affliction and behaved abominably. "But he's talkin' bitter truth, though. Eyah!

"My very worst frind from beginnin' to ind
By the blood av a mouse was mesilf!"

. . . . . .

When I woke I saw Mulvaney, the night dew gemming his moustache, leaning on his rifle at picket, lonely as Prometheus on his rock, with I know not what vultures tearing his liver.

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THE GOD FROM THE MACHINE

Hit a man an' help a woman, an' ye can't be far wrong anyways.—*Maxims of Private Mulvaney.*

THE Inexpressibles gave a ball. They borrowed a seven-pounder from the Gunners, and wreathed it with laurels, and made the dancing-floor plate-glass, and provided a supper the like of which had never been eaten before, and set two sentries at the door of the room to hold the trays of programme-cards. My friend, Private Mulvaney, was one of the sentries, because he was the tallest man in the regiment. When the dance was fairly started the sentries were released, and Private Mulvaney went to curry favour with the Mess Sergeant in charge of the supper. Whether the Mess Sergeant gave or Mulvaney took, I cannot say. All that I am certain of is that, at supper-time, I found Mulvaney with Private Ortheris, two-thirds of a ham, a loaf of bread, half a *pâté-de-foie-gras*, and two magnums of champagne, sitting on the roof of my carriage. As I came up I heard him saying—

"Praise be a danst doesn't come as often as Ord'ly-room, or, by this an' that, Orth'ris, me son,

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I wud be the dishgrace av the rig'mint instid av the brightest jool in uts crown."

"*Hand* the Colonel's pet noosance," said Ortheris. "But wot makes you curse your rations? This 'ere fizzy stuff's good enough."

"Stuff, ye oncivilised pagin! 'Tis champagne we're dhrinkin' now. 'Tisn't that I am set ag'in. 'Tis this quare stuff wid the little bits av black leather in ut. I misdoubt I will be distressin'ly sick wid ut in the mornin'. Fwhat is ut?"

"Goose liver," I said, climbing on the top of the carriage, for I knew that it was better to sit out with Mulvaney than to dance many dances.

"Goose liver is ut?" said Mulvaney. "Faith, I'm thinkin' thim that makes it wud do betther to cut up the Colonel. He carries a power av liver undher his right arrum whin the days are warm an' the nights chill. He wud give thim tons an' tons av liver. 'Tis he sez so. 'I'm all liver to-day,' sez he; an' wid that he ordhers me ten days C. B. for as moild a dhrink as iver a good sodger tuk betune his teeth."

"That was when 'e wanted for to wash 'isself in the Fort Ditch," Ortheris explained. "Said there was too much beer in the Barrack water-butts for a God-fearing man. You was lucky in gettin' orf with wot you did, Mulvaney."

"Say you so? Now I'm pershuaded I was cruel hard trated, seein' fwhat I've done for the

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likes av him in the days whin my eyes were wider opin than they are now. Man alive, for the Colonel to whip *me* on the peg in that way! Me that have saved the repitation av a ten times bether man than him! 'Twas ne-farious — an' that manes a power av evil!"

"Never mind the nefariousness," I said. "Whose reputation did you save?"

"More's the pity, 'twasn't my own, but I tuk more trouble wid ut than av ut was. 'Twas just my way, messin' wid fwhat was no business av mine. Hear now!" He settled himself at ease on the top of the carriage. "I'll tell you all about ut. Av coorse I will name no names, for there's wan that's an orf'cer's lady now, that was in ut, and no more will I name places, for a man is thracked by a place."

"Eyah!" said Ortheris lazily, "but this is a mixed story wot's comin'."

"Wanst upon a time, as the childher-books say, I was a recruity."

"Was you though?" said Ortheris; "now that's extryordinary!"

"Orth'ris," said Mulvaney, "av you opin thim lips av yours again, I will, savin' your presince, Sorr, take you by the slack av your trousers an' heave you."

"I'm mum," said Ortheris. "Wot 'appened when you was a recruity?"

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"I was a betther recruity than you iver was or will be, but that's neither here nor there. Thin I became a man, an' the divil av a man I was fifteen years ago. They called me Buck Mulvaney in thim days, an', begad, I tuk a woman's eye. I did that! Orth'ris, ye scrub, fwhat are ye sniggerin' at? Do you misdoubt me?"

"Devil a doubt!" said Ortheris; "but I've 'eard summat like that before!"

Mulvaney dismissed the impertinence with a lofty wave of his hand, and continued—

"An' the orf'cers av the rig'mint I was in in thim days *was* orf'cers—gran' men, wid a manner on 'em, an' a way wid 'em such as is not made these days—all but wan—wan o' the capt'ns. A bad dhrill, a wake voice, an' a limp leg—thim three things are the signs av a bad man. You bear that in your mind, Orth'ris, me son.

"An' the Colonel av the rig'mint had a daughter—wan av thim lamblike, bleatin', pick-me-up-an'-carry-me-or-I'll-die gurls such as was made for the natural prey av men like the Capt'n, who was iverlastin' payin' coort to her, though the Colonel he said time an' over, 'Kape out av the brute's way, my dear.' But he niver had the heart for to send her away from the throuble, bein' as he was a widower, an' she their wan child."

"Stop a minute, Mulvaney," said I; "how in the world did you come to know these things?"

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"How did I come?" said Mulvaney, with a scornful grunt; "bekaze I'm turned durin' the Quane's pleasure to a lump av wood, lookin' out straight forninst me, wid a — a — candelabbrum in my hand, for you to pick your cards out av, must I not see nor feel? Av coorse I du! Up my back, an' in my boots, an' in the short hair av the neck — that's where I kape my eyes whin I'm on duty an' the reg'lar wans are fixed. Know! Take my word for it, Sorr, ivrything an' a great dale more is known in a rig'mint; or fwhat wud be the use av a Mess Sargint, or a Sargint's wife doin' wet-nurse to the Major's baby? To reshume. He was a bad dhrill was this Capt'n — a rotten bad dhrill — an' whin first I ran me eye over him, I sez to myself: 'My Militia bantam!' I sez, 'my cock av a Gosport dunghill,'—'twas from Portsmouth he came to us,— 'there's combs to be cut,' sez I, 'an' by the grace av God, 'tis Terence Mulvaney will cut thim.'

"So he wint menowderin', and minanderin', an' blandandherin' roun' an' about the Colonel's daughter, an' she, poor innocint, lookin' at him like a Comm'ssariat bullock looks at the Comp'ny cook. He'd a dhirty little scrub av a black moustache, an' he twisted an' turned ivry wurrd he used as av he found ut too sweet for to spit out. Eyah! He was a tricky man an' a liar by natur'. Some are born so. He was wan. I knew he was

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over his belt in money borrowed from natives; besides a lot av other matthers which, in regard for your presince, Sorr, I will oblitherate. A little av fwhat I knew, the Colonel knew, for he wud have none av him, an' that, I'm thinkin', by fwhat happened aftherwards, the Capt'n knew.

"Wan day, bein' mortial idle, or they wud never ha' thried ut, the rig'mint gave amsure theatricals—orf'cers an' orf'cers' ladies. You've seen the likes time an' agin, Sorr, an' poor fun 'tis for thim that sit in the back row an' stamp wid their boots for the honour av the rig'mint. I was told off for to shif' the scenes, haulin' up this an' draggin' down that. Light work ut was, wid lashin's av beer and the gurl that dhressed the orf'cers' ladies—but she died in Aggra twelve years gone, an' my tongue's gettin' the betther av me. They was actin' a play thing called 'Sweethearts,' which you may ha' heard av, an' the Colonel's daughter she was a lady's maid. The Capt'n was a boy called Broom—Spread Broom was his name in the play. Thin I saw—ut come out in the actin'—fwhat I niver saw before, an' that was that he was no gentleman. They was too much together, thim two, a-whishperin' behind the scenes I shifted, an' some av what they said I heard; for I was death—blue death an' ivy—on the comb-cuttin'. He was iverlastin'ly oppressing her to fall in wid some sneakin' schame av his, an' she was thryin'

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to stand out against him, but not as though she was set in her will. I wonder now in thim days that my ears did not grow a yard on me head wid list'nin'. But I looked straight forninst me an' hauled up this an' dragged down that, such as was my duty, an' the orf'cers' ladies sez one to another, thinkin' I was out av listen-reach: 'Fwhat an obligin' young man is this Corp'ril Mulvaney!' I was a Corp'ril then. I was rejuced aftherwards, but, no matther, I was a Corp'ril wanst.

"Well, this 'Sweethearts'' business wint on like most amshure theatricals, an' barrin' fwhat I suspicioned, 'twasn't till the dhress-rehearsal that I saw for certain that thim two — he the blackguard, an' she no wiser than she should ha' been — had put up an evasion."

"A what?" said I.

"E-vasion! Fwhat you call an elopemint. E-vasion I calls ut, bekaze, exceptin' whin 'tis right an' natural an' proper, 'tis wrong an' dhirty to steal a man's wan child, she not knowin' her own mind. There was a Sargint in the Comm'ssariat who set my face upon e-vasions. I'll tell you about that ——"

"Stick to the bloomin' Captains, Mulvaney," said Ortheris; "Comm'ssariat Sargints is low."

Mulvaney accepted the amendment and went on: —

"Now I knew that the Colonel was no fool,

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any more than me, for I was hild the smartest man in the rig'mint, an' the Colonel was the best orf'cer commandin' in Asia; so fwhat he said an' *I* said was a mortial truth. We knew that the Capt'n was bad, but, for reasons which I have already oblitherated, I knew more than me Colonel. I wud ha' rolled out his face wid the butt av me gun before permittin' av him to steal the gurl. Saints knew av he wud ha' married her, and av he didn't she wud be in great tormint, an' the divil av a 'scandal.' But I niver sthruck, niver raised me hand on me shuperior orf'cer; an' that was a merricle now I come to considher it."

"Mulvaney, the dawn's risin'," said Ortheris, "an' we're no nearer 'ome than we was at the beginnin'. Lend me your pouch. Mine's all dust."

Mulvaney pitched his pouch over, and filled his pipe afresh.

"So the dhress-rehearsal came to an end, an', bekaze I was curious, I stayed behind whin the scene-shiftin' was ended, an' I shud ha' been in barricks, lyin' as flat as a toad under a painted cottage thing. They was talkin' in whispers, an' she was shiverin' an' gaspin' like a fresh-hukked fish. 'Are you sure you've got the hang av the manewvers?' sez he, or wurrds to that effec', as the coort-martial sez. 'Sure as death,' sez she, 'but I misdoubt 'tis cruel hard on my father.' 'Damn your father,' sez he, or anyways 'twas fwhat he thought,

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'the arrangement is as clear as mud. Jungi will drive the carr'ge afther all's over, an' you come to the station, cool an' aisy, in time for the two-o'clock thrain, where I'll be wid your kit.' 'Faith,' thinks I to myself, 'thin there's a *ayah* in the business tu!'

"A powerful bad thing is a *ayah*. Don't you niver have any thruck wid wan. Then he began sootherin' her, an all the orf'cers, and orf'cers' ladies left, an' they put out the lights. To explain the theory av the flight, as they say at Musk'thry, you must ondherstand that afther this 'Sweethearts'' nonsinse was ended there was another little bit av a play called 'Couples'—some kind av couple or another. The gurl was actin' in this, but not the man. I suspicioned he'd go to the station wid the gurl's kit at the end av the first piece. 'Twas the kit that flusthered me, for I knew for a Capt'n to go trapesing about the impire wid the Lord knew what av a *truso* on his arrum was nefarious, an' wud be worse than easin' the flag, so far as the talk aftherwards wint."

"'Old on, Mulvaney. Wot's *truso?*" said Ortheris.

"You're an oncivilised man, me son. Whin a gurl's married, all her kit an' 'coutrements are *truso*, which manes weddin'-portion. An' 'tis the same whin she's runnin' away, even wid the biggest blackguard on the Arrmy List.

"So I made my plan av campaign. The Col-

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onel's house was a good two miles away. 'Dennis,' sez I to my colour-sargint, 'av you love me lend me your kyart, for me heart is bruk an' me feet is sore wid trampin' to and from this foolishness at the Gaff.' An' Dennis lent ut, wid a rampin', stampin' red stallion in the shafts. Whin they was all settled down to their 'Sweethearts' for the first scene, which was a long wan, I slips outside and into the kyart. Mother av Hivin! but I made that horse walk, an' we came into the Colonel's compound as the divil wint through Athlone — in standin' le'ps. There was no one there excipt the servints, an I wint round to the back an' found the girl's *ayah*.

"'Ye black brazen Jezebel,' sez I, 'sellin' your masther's honour for five rupees — pack up all the Miss Sahib's kit an' look slippy! Capt'n Sahib's order,' sez I. 'Going to the station we are,' I sez, an' wid that I laid my finger to my nose an' looked the schamin' sinner I was.

"'*Bote accby*,' says she, so I knew she was in the business, an' I piled up all the sweet talk I'd iver learnt in the bazars on to this she-bullock, an' prayed av her to put all the quick she knew into the thing. While she packed, I stud outside an' sweated, for I was wanted for to shif' the second scene. I tell you, a young gurl's e-vasion manes as much baggage as a rig'mint on the line av march! 'Saints help Dennis's springs,' thinks I, as I bun-

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dled the stuff into the thrap, 'for I'll have no mercy!'

"'I'm comin' too,' says the *ayah*.

"'No, you don't,' sez I, 'later — *pechy!* You *baito* where you are. I'll *pechy* come an' bring you *sart* along with me, you maraudin' '— niver mind fwhat I called her.

"Thin I wint for the Gaff, an' by the special ordher av Providence, for I was doin' a good work you will ondherstand, Dennis's springs hild toight. 'Now, whin the Capt'n goes for that kit,' thinks I, 'he'll be throubled.' At the end av 'Sweethearts' off the Capt'n runs in his kyart to the Colonel's house, an' I sits down on the steps and laughs. Wanst an' again I slipped in to see how the little piece was goin', an' whin ut was near endin' I stepped out all among the carr'ges an' sings out very softly, 'Jungi!' Wid that a carr'ge began to move, an' I waved to the dhriver. '*Hitherao!*' sez I, an' he *hitheraoed* till I judged he was at proper distance, an' thin I tuk him, fair an' square betune the eyes, all I knew for good or bad, an' he dhropped wid a guggle like the canteen beer-engine whin ut's runnin' low. Thin I ran to the kyart an' tuk out all the kit an' piled it into the carr'ge, the sweat runnin' down my face in dhrops. 'Go home,' sez I to the *sais;* 'you'll find a man close here. Very sick he is. Take him away, an' av you iver say wan wurrd about fwhat you've

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dekkoed, I'll *marrow* you till your own wife won't *sumjao* who you are!' Thin I heard the stampin' av feet at the ind av the play, an' I ran in to let down the curtain. Whin they all came out the gurl thried to hide herself behind wan av the pillars, an' sez 'Jungi' in a voice that wouldn't ha' scared a hare. I run over to Jungi's carr'ge an' tuk up the lousy old horse-blanket on the box, wrapped my head an' the rest av me in ut, an' dhrove up to where she was.

"'Miss Sahib,' sez I; 'goin' to the station? Capt'n Sahib's order!' an' widout a sign she jumped in all among her own kit.

"I laid to an' dhruv like steam to the Colonel's house before the Colonel was there, an' she screamed an' I thought she was goin' off. Out comes the *ayah*, sayin' all sorts av things about the Capt'n havin' come for the kit an' gone to the station.

"'Take out the luggage, you divil,' sez I, 'or I'll murther you!'

"The lights av the people's thraps comin' from the Gaff was showin' across the parade-ground, an', by this an' that, the way thim two women worked at the bundles an' thrunks was a caution! I was dyin' to help, but, seein' I didn't want to be known, I sat wid the blanket roun' me an' coughed an' thanked the Saints there was no moon that night.

"Whin all was in the house again, I niver asked for *bukshish*, but dhruv tremenjus in the opp'site

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way from the other carr'ge an' put out my lights. Presintly, I saw a naygur man wallowin' in the road. I slipped down before I got to him, for I suspicioned Providence was wid me all through that night. 'Twas Jungi, his nose smashed in flat, all dumb sick as you plaze. Dennis's man must have tilted him out av the thrap. Whin he came to, 'Hutt!' sez I, but he began to howl.

"'You black lump av dhirt,' I sez, 'is this the way you dhrive your *gharri?* That *tikka* has been *owin'* an' *fere-owin'* all over the bloomin' counthry this whole bloomin' night, an' you as *mut-walla* as Davey's sow. Get up, you hog!' sez I, louder, for I heard the wheels av a thrap in the dark; 'get up an' light your lamps, or you'll be run into!' This was on the road to the Railway Station.

"'Fwhat the divil's this?' sez the Capt'n's voice in the dhark, an' I could judge he was in a lather av rage.

"'*Gharri* dhriver here, dhrunk, Sorr,' sez I; 'I've found his *gharri* sthrayin' about cantonmints, an' now I've found him.'

"'Oh!' sez the Capt'n; 'fwhat's his name?' I stooped down an' pretended to listen.

"'He sez his name's Jungi, Sorr,' sez I.

"'Hould my harse,' sez the Capt'n to his man, an' wid that he gets down wid the whip an' lays into Jungi, just mad with rage an' swearin' like the scutt he was.

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"I thought, afther a while, he wud kill the man, so I sez:—'Stop, Sorr, or you'll murdher him!' That dhrew all his fire on me, an' he cursed me into blazes, an' out again. I stud to attenshin an' saluted:—'Sorr,' sez I, 'av ivry man in this wurruld had his rights, I'm thinkin' that more than wan would be beat'n to a jelly for this night's work—that niver came off at all, Sorr, as you see?' 'Now,' thinks I to myself, 'Terence Mulvaney, you've cut your own throat, for he'll sthrike, an' you'll knock him down for the good av his sowl an' your own iverlastin' dishgrace!'

"But the Capt'n niver said a single wurrd. He choked where he stud, an' thin he wint into his thrap widout sayin' good-night, an' I wint back to barricks.'

"And then?" said Ortheris and I together.

"That was all," said Mulvaney; "niver another word did I hear av the whole thing. All I know was that there was no e-vasion, an' that was fwhat I wanted. Now, I put ut to you, Sorr, is ten days' C. B. a fit an' a proper tratement for a man who has behaved as me?"

"Well, any'ow," said Ortheris, "'tweren't this 'ere Colonel's daughter, an' you *was* blazin' copped when you tried to wash in the Fort Ditch."

"That," said Mulvaney, finishing the champagne, "is a shuparfluous an' impert'nint observation."

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WITH THE MAIN GUARD

Der jungere Uhlanen
Sit round mit open mouth
While Breitmann tell dem stdories
Of fightin' in the South;
Und gif dem moral lessons,
How before der battle pops,
Take a little prayer to Himmel
Und a goot long drink of Schnapps.

Hans Breitmann's Ballads.

"MARY, Mother av Mercy, fwhat the divil possist us to take an' kape this melancolious counthry? Answer me that, Sorr."

It was Mulvaney who was speaking. The time was one o'clock of a stifling June night, and the place was the main gate of Fort Amara, most desolate and least desirable of all fortresses in India. What I was doing there at that hour is a question which only concerns M'Grath the Sergeant of the Guard, and the men on the gate.

"Slape," said Mulvaney, "is a shuparfluous necessity. This gyard'll shtay lively till relieved." He himself was stripped to the waist; Learoyd on the next bedstead was dripping from the skinful

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of water which Ortheris, clad only in white trousers, had just sluiced over his shoulders; and a fourth private was muttering uneasily as he dozed open-mouthed in the glare of the great guard-lantern. The heat under the bricked archway was terrifying.

"The worrst night that iver I remimber. Eyah! Is all Hell loose this tide?" said Mulvaney. A puff of burning wind lashed through the wicket-gate like a wave of the sea, and Ortheris swore.

"Are ye more heasy, Jock?" he said to Learoyd. "Put yer 'ead between your legs. It'll go orf in a minute."

"Ah don't care. Ah would not care, but ma heart is plaayin' tivvy-tivvy on ma ribs. Let me die! Oh, leave me die!" groaned the huge Yorkshireman, who was feeling the heat acutely, being of fleshly build.

The sleeper under the lantern roused for a moment and raised himself on his elbow.—"Die and be damned then!" he said. "*I*'m damned and I can't die!"

"Who's that?" I whispered, for the voice was new to me.

"Gentleman born," said Mulvaney; "Corp'ril wan year, Sargint nex'. Red-hot on his C'mission, but dhrinks like a fish. He'll be gone before the cowld weather's here. So!"

He slipped his boot, and with the naked toe

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just touched the trigger of his Martini. Ortheris misunderstood the movement, and the next instant the Irishman's rifle was dashed aside, while Ortheris stood before him, his eyes blazing with reproof.

"You!" said Ortheris. "My Gawd, *you!* If it was you, wot would *we* do?"

"Kape quiet, little man," said Mulvaney, putting him aside, but very gently; "'tis not me, nor will ut be me whoile Dinah Shadd's here. I was but showin' something."

Learoyd, bowed on his bedstead, groaned, and the gentleman-ranker sighed in his sleep. Ortheris took Mulvaney's tendered pouch, and we three smoked gravely for a space while the dust-devils danced on the glacis and scoured the red-hot plain.

"Pop?" said Ortheris, wiping his forehead.

"Don't tantalise wid talkin' av dhrink, or I'll shtuff you into your own breech-block an'—fire you off!" grunted Mulvaney.

Ortheris chuckled, and from a niche in the verandah produced six bottles of gingerade.

"Where did ye get ut, ye Machiavel?" said Mulvaney. "'Tis no bazar pop."

"'Ow do *Hi* know wot the Orf'cers drink?" answered Ortheris. "Arst the mess-man."

"Ye'll have a Disthrict Coort-martial settin' on ye yet, me son," said Mulvaney, "but"—he opened a bottle—"I will not report ye this time.

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Fwhat's in the mess-kit is mint for the belly, as they say, 'specially whin that mate is dhrink. Here's luck! A bloody war or a — no, we've got the sickly season. War, thin!" — he waved the innocent "pop" to the four quarters of Heaven. "Bloody war! North, East, South, an' West! Jock, ye quakin' hayrick, come an' dhrink."

But Learoyd, half mad with the fear of death presaged in the swelling veins of his neck, was begging his Maker to strike him dead, and fighting for more air between his prayers. A second time Ortheris drenched the quivering body with water, and the giant revived.

"An' Ah divn't see thot a mon is i' fettle for gooin' on to live; an' Ah divn't see thot there is owt for t' livin' for. Hear now, lads! Ah'm tired — tired. There's nobbut watter i' ma bones. Let me die!"

The hollow of the arch gave back Learoyd's broken whisper in a bass boom. Mulvaney looked at me hopelessly, but I remembered how the madness of despair had once fallen upon Ortheris, that weary, weary afternoon on the banks of the Khemi River, and how it had been exorcised by the skilful magician Mulvaney.

"Talk, Terence!" I said, "or we shall have Learoyd slinging loose, and he'll be worse than Ortheris was. Talk! He'll answer to your voice."

Almost before Ortheris had deftly thrown all

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the rifles of the Guard on Mulvaney's bedstead, the Irishman's voice was uplifted as that of one in the middle of a story, and, turning to me, he said —

"In barricks or out of ut, as *you* say, Sorr, an Oirish rig'mint is the divil an' more. 'Tis only fit for a young man wid eddicated fisteses. Oh, the crame av disruption is an Oirish rig'mint, an' rippin', tearin', ragin' scattherers in the field av war! My first rig'mint was Oirish — Faynians an' rebils to the heart av their marrow was they, an' *so* they fought for the Widdy betther than most, bein' contrairy — Oirish. They was the Black Tyrone. You've heard av thim, Sorr?"

Heard of them! I knew the Black Tyrone for the choicest collection of unmitigated blackguards, dog-stealers, robbers of hen-roosts, assaulters of innocent citizens, and recklessly daring heroes in the Army List. Half Europe and half Asia has had cause to know the Black Tyrone — good luck be with their tattered Colours as Glory has ever been!

"They *was* hot pickils an' ginger! I cut a man's head tu deep wid my belt in the days av my youth, an', afther some circumstances which I will oblitherate, I came to the Ould Rig'mint, bearin' the character av a man wid hands an' feet. But, as I was goin' to tell you, I fell acrost the Black Tyrone agin wan day whin we wanted thim

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powerful bad. Orth'ris, me son, fwhat was the name av that place where they sint wan comp'ny av us an' wan av the Tyrone roun' a hill an' down again, all for to tache the Paythans something they'd niver learned before? Afther Ghuzni 'twas."

"Don't know what the bloomin' Paythans called it. We called it Silver's Theayter. You know that, sure!"

"Silver's Theatre—so 'twas. A gut betune two hills, as black as a bucket, an' as thin as a girl's waist. There was over-many Paythans for our convaynience in the gut, an' begad they called thimselves a Reserve—bein' impident by natur'! Our Scotchies an' lashins av Gurkys was poundin' into some Paythan rig'mints, I think 'twas. Scotchies an' Gurkys are twins bekaze they're so onlike, an' they get dhrunk together whin God plazes. As I was sayin', they sint wan comp'ny av the Ould an' wan av the Tyrone to double up the hill an' clane out the Paythan Reserve. Orf'cers was scarce in thim days, fwhat with dysintry an' not takin' care av thimselves, an' we was sint out wid only wan orf'cer for the comp'ny; but he was a Man that had his feet beneath him, an' all his teeth in their sockuts."

"Who was he?" I asked.

"Captain O'Neil—Old Crook—Cruikna-bulleen—him that I tould ye that tale av whin he

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was in Burma. Hah! He was a Man.[1] The Tyrone tuk a little orf'cer bhoy, but divil a bit was he in command, as I'll dimonstrate presintly. We an' they came over the brow av the hill, wan on each side av the gut, an' there was that ondacint Reserve waitin' down below like rats in a pit.

"'Howld on, men,' sez Crook, who tuk a mother's care av us always. 'Rowl some rocks on thim by way av visitin'-kyards.' We hadn't rowled more than twinty bowlders, an' the Paythans was beginnin' to swear tremenjus, whin the little orf'cer bhoy av the Tyrone shqueaks out acrost the valley:—'Fwhat the devil an' all are you doin', shpoilin' the fun for my men? Do ye not see they'll stand?'

"'Faith, that's a rare pluckt wan!' sez Crook. 'Niver mind the rocks, men. Come along down an' take tay wid thim!'

"'There's damned little sugar in ut!' sez my rear-rank man; but Crook heard.

"'Have ye not all got spoons?' he sez, laughin', an' down we wint as fast as we cud. Learoyd bein' sick at the Base, he, av coorse, was not there."

"Thot's a lie!" said Learoyd, dragging his

[1] Now first of the foemen of Boh Da Thone
Was Captain O'Neil of the Black Tyrone.
The Ballad of Boh Da Thone.

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bedstead nearer. "Ah gotten *thot* theer, an' you knaw it, Mulvaaney." He threw up his arms, and from the right arm-pit ran, diagonally through the fell of his chest, a thin white line terminating near the fourth left rib.

"My mind's goin'," said Mulvaney, the unabashed. "Ye were there. Fwhat was I thinkin' of! 'Twas another man, av coorse. Well, you'll remimber thin, Jock, how we an' the Tyrone met wid a bang at the bottom an' got jammed past all movin' among the Paythans."

"Ow! It *was* a tight 'ole. I was squeezed till I thought I'd bloomin' well bust," said Ortheris, rubbing his stomach meditatively.

"'Twas no place for a little man, but *wan* little man'—Mulvaney put his hand on Ortheris's shoulder—"saved the life av me. There we shtuck, for divil a bit did the Paythans flinch, an' divil a bit dare we; our business bein' to clear 'em out. An' the most exthryordinar' thing av all was that we an' they just rushed into each other's arrums, an' there was no firing for a long time. Nothin' but knife an' bay'nit when we cud get our hands free: an' that was not often. We wus breast-on to thim, an' the Tyrone was yelpin' behind av us in a way I didn't see the lean av at first. But I knew later, an' so did the Paythans.

"'Knee to knee!' sings out Crook, wid a laugh, whin the rush av our comin' into the gut shtopped,

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an' he was huggin' a hairy great Paythan, neither bein' able to do anything to the other, tho' both was wishful.

"'Breast to breast!' he sez, as the Tyrone was pushin' us forward closer an' closer.

"'An' hand over back!' sez a Sargint that was behin'. I saw a sword lick out past Crook's ear, an' the Paythan was tuk in the apple av his throat like a pig at Dromeen fair.

"'Thank ye, Brother Inner Guard,' sez Crook, cool as a cucumber widout salt. 'I wanted that room.' An' he wint forward by the thickness av a man's body, havin' turned the Paythan undher him. The man bit the heel off Crook's boot in his death-bite.

"'Push, men!' sez Crook. 'Push, ye paper-backed beggars!' he sez. 'Am I to pull ye through?' So we pushed, an' we kicked, an' we swung, an' we swore, an' the grass bein' slippery, our heels wouldn't bite, an' God help the front-rank man that wint down that day!"

"'Ave you ever bin in the Pit hentrance o' the Vic. on a thick night?" interrupted Ortheris. "It was worse nor that, for they was goin' one way an' we wouldn't 'ave it. Leastaways, I 'adn't much to say."

"Faith, me son, ye said ut, thin. I kep' the little man betune my knees as long as I cud, but he was 'pokin' roun' wid his bay'nit, blindin' an'

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stiffin' feroshus. The divil of a man is Orth'ris in a ruction — aren't ye?" said Mulvaney.

"Don't make game!" said the Cockney. "I knowed I wasn't no good then, but I guv 'em compot from the lef' flank when we opened out. No!" he said, bringing down his hand with a thump on the bedstead, "a bay'nit ain't no good to a little man — might as well 'ave a bloomin' fishin'-rod! I 'ate a clawin', maulin' mess, but gimme a breech that's wore out a bit, an' hammi-nition one year in store, to let the powder kiss the bullet, an' put me somewheres where I ain't trod on by 'ulkin swine like you, an' s'elp me Gawd, I could bowl you over five times outer seven at height 'undred. Would yer try, you lumberin' Hirishman."

"No, ye wasp. I've seen ye do ut. I say there's nothin' better than the bay'nit, wid a long reach, a double twist av ye can, an' a slow re-cover."

"Dom the bay'nit," said Learoyd, who had been listening intently. "Look a-here!" He picked up a rifle an inch below the foresight with an un-derhand action, and used it exactly as a man would use a dagger.

"Sitha," said he softly, "thot's better than owt, for a mon can bash t' faace wi' thot, an', if he divn't, he can breeak t' forearm o' t' gaard. 'Tis not i' t' books, though. Gie me t' butt."

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"Each does ut his own way, like makin' love," said Mulvaney quietly; "the butt or the bay'nit or the bullet accordin' to the natur' av the man. Well, as I was sayin', we shtuck there breathin' in each other's faces and swearin' powerful; Orth'ris cursin' the mother that bore him bekaze he was not three inches taller.

"Prisintly he sez:—'Duck, ye lump, an' I can get at a man over your shouldher!'

"'You'll blow me head off,' I sez, throwin' my arm clear; 'go through under my arm-pit, ye bloodthirsty little scutt,' sez I, 'but don't shtick me or I'll wring your ears round.'

"Fwhat was ut ye gave the Paythan man forninst me, him that cut at me whin I cudn't move hand or foot? Hot or cowld was ut?"

"Cold," said Ortheris, "up an' under the ribjint. 'E come down flat. Best for you 'e did."

"Thrue, me son! This jam thing that I'm talkin' about lasted for five minuts good, an' thin we got our arms clear an' wint in. I misremimber exactly fwhat I did, but I didn't want Dinah to be a widdy at the Depôt. Thin, afther some promishkuous hackin' we shtuck again, an' the Tyrone behin' was callin' us dogs an' cowards an' all manner av names; we barrin' their way.

"'Fwhat ails the Tyrone?' thinks I; 'they've the makin's av a most convanient fight here.'

"A man behind me sez beseechful an' in a

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whisper:—'Let me get at thim! For the love av Mary give me room beside ye, ye tall man!'

"'An' who are you that's so anxious to be kilt?' sez I, widout turnin' my head, for the long knives was dancin' in front like the sun on Donegal Bay whin ut's rough.

"'We've seen our dead,' he sez, squeezin' into me; 'our dead that was men two days gone! An' me that was his cousin by blood could not bring Tim Coulan off! Let me get on,' he sez, 'let me get to thim, or I'll run ye through the back!'

"'My troth,' thinks I, 'if the Tyrone have seen their dead, God help the Paythans this day!' An' thin I knew why the Oirish was ragin' behind us as they was.

"I gave room to the man, an' he ran forward wid the Haymakers' Lift on his bay'nit an' swung a Paythan clear off his feet by the belly-band av the brute, an' the iron bruk at the lockin'-ring.

"'Tim Coulan 'll slape aisy to-night,' sez he wid a grin; an' the next minut his head was in two halves and he wint down grinnin' by sections.

"The Tyrone was pushin' an' pushin' in, an' our men was swearin' at thim, an' Crook was workin' away in front av us all, his sword-arm swingin' like a pump-handle an' his revolver spittin' like a cat. But the strange thing av ut was the quiet that lay upon. 'Twas like a fight in a drame — except for thim that was dead.

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"Whin I gave room to the Oirishman I was expinded an' forlorn in my inside. 'Tis a way I have, savin' your prisince, Sorr, in action. 'Let me out, bhoys,' sez I, backin' in among thim. 'I'm goin' to be onwell!' Faith they gave me room at the wurrud, though they would not ha' given room for all Hell wid the chill off. When I got clear, I was, savin' your presince, Sorr, outragis sick bekaze I had dhrunk heavy that day.

"Well an' far out av harm was a Sargint av the Tyrone sittin' on the little orf'cer bhoy who had stopped Crook from rowlin' the rocks. Oh, he was a beautiful bhoy, an' the long black curses was slidin' out av his innocint mouth like mornin'-jew from a rose!

"'Fwhat have you got there?' sez I to the Sargint.

"'Wan av Her Majesty's bantams wid his spurs up,' sez he. 'He's goin' to Coort-martial me.'

"'Let me go!' sez the little orf'cer bhoy. 'Let me go and command my men!' manin' thereby the Black Tyrone, which was beyond any command — ay, even av they had made the Divil a Field-orf'cer.

"'His father howlds my mother's cow-feed in Clonmel,' sez the man that was sittin' on him. 'Will I go back to *his* mother an' tell her that I've let him throw himself away? Lie still, ye

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little pinch av dynamite, an' Coort-martial me aftherwards.'

"'Good,' sez I; ''tis the likes av him makes the likes av the Commandher-in-Chief, but we must presarve thim. Fwhat d' you want to do, Sorr?' sez I, very politeful.

"'Kill the beggars—kill the beggars!' he shqueaks; his big blue eyes brimmin' wid tears.

"'An' how'll ye do that?' sez I. 'You've shquibbed off your revolver like a child wid a cracker; you can make no play wid that fine large sword av yours; an' your hand's shakin' like an asp on a leaf. Lie still an' grow,' sez I.

"'Get back to your comp'ny,' sez he; 'you're insolint!'

"'All in good time,' sez I, 'but I'll have a dhrink first.'

"Just thin Crook comes up, blue an' white all over where he wasn't red.

"'Wather!' sez he; 'I'm dead wid drouth! Oh, but it's a gran' day!'

"He dhrank half a skinful, and the rest he tilts into his chest, an' it fair hissed on the hairy hide av him. He sees the little orf'cer bhoy undher the Sargint.

"'Fwhat's yonder?' sez he.

"'Mutiny, Sorr,' sez the Sargint, an' the orf'cer bhoy begins pleadin' pitiful to Crook to be let go: but divil a bit wud Crook budge.

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"'Kape him there,' he sez, 'tis no child's work this day. By the same token,' sez he, 'I'll confishcate that iligant nickel-plated scent-sprinkler av yours, for my own has been vomitin' dishgraceful!'

"The fork av his hand was black wid the backspit av the machine. So he tuk the orf'cer bhoy's revolver. Ye may look, Sorr, but, by my faith, *there's a dale more done in the field than iver gets into Field Ordhers!*

"'Come on, Mulvaney,' sez Crook; 'is this a Coort-martial?' The two av us wint back together into the mess, an' the Paythans were still standin' up. They was not *too* impart'nint, though, for the Tyrone was callin' wan to another to remimber Tim Coulan.

"Crook stopped outside av the strife an' looked anxious, his eyes rowlin' roun'.

"'Fwhat is ut, Sorr?' sez I; 'can I get ye anything?'

"'Where's a bugler?' sez he.

"I wint into the crowd — our men was dhrawin' breath behin' the Tyrone, who was fightin' like sowls in tormint — an' prisintly I came acrost little Frehan, our bugler bhoy, pokin' roun' among the best wid a rifle an' bay'nit.

"'Is amusin' yoursilf fwhat you're paid for, ye limb?' sez I, catchin' him by the scruff. 'Come out av that an' attind to your duty,' I sez; but the bhoy was not pleased.

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"'I've got wan,' sez he, grinnin', 'big as you, Mulvaney, an' fair half as ugly. Let me go get another.'

"I was dishpleased at the personability av that remark, so I tucks him under my arm an' carries him to Crook, who was watchin' how the fight wint. Crook cuffs him till the bhoy cries, an' thin sez nothin' for a whoile.

"The Paythans began to flicker onaisy, an' our men roared. 'Opin ordher! Double!' sez Crook. 'Blow, child, blow for the honour av the British Arrmy!'

"That bhoy blew like a typhoon, an' the Tyrone an' we opined out as the Paythans broke, an' I saw that fwhat had gone before wud be kissin' an' huggin' to fwhat was to come. We'd dhruv thim into a broad part av the gut whin they gave, an' thin we opined out an' fair danced down the valley, dhrivin' thim before us. Oh, 'twas lovely, an' stiddy, too! There was the Sargints on the flanks av what was left av us, kapin' touch, an' the fire was runnin' from flank to flank, an' the Paythans was dhroppin'. We opined out wid the widenin' av the valley, an' whin the valley narrowed we closed again like the shticks on a lady's fan, an' at the far ind av the gut where they thried to stand, we fair blew them off their feet, for we had expinded very little ammunition by reason av the knife work."

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"Hi used thirty rounds goin' down that valley," said Ortheris, "an' it was gentleman's work. Might 'a' done it in a white 'andkerchief an' pink silk stockin's, that part. Hi was on in that piece."

"You could ha' heard the Tyrone yellin' a mile away," said Mulvaney, "an' 'twas all their Sargints cud do to get thim off. They was mad—mad—mad! Crook sits down in the quiet that fell whin we had gone down the valley, an' covers his face wid his hands. Prisintly we all came back again accordin' to our natures and disposishins, for they, mark you, show through the hide av a man in that hour.

"'Bhoys! bhoys!' sez Crook to himself. 'I misdoubt we could ha' engaged at long range an' saved betther men than me.' He looked at our dead an' said no more.

"'Captain dear,' sez a man av the Tyrone, comin' up wid his mouth bigger than iver his mother kissed ut, spittin' blood like a whale; 'Captain dear,' sez he, 'if wan or two in the shtalls have been discommoded, the gallery have enjoyed the performinces av a Roshus.'

"Thin I knew that man for the Dublin dock-rat he was—wan av the bhoys that made the lessee av Silver's Theatre gray before his time wid tearin' out the bowils av the benches an' t'rowin' thim into the pit. So I passed the wurrud that I knew when I was in the Tyrone an' we lay in

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Dublin. 'I don't know who 'twas,' I whispers, 'an' I don't care, but anyways I'll knock the face av you, Tim Kelly.'

"'Eyah!' sez the man, 'was you there too? We'll call ut Silver's Theatre.' Half the Tyrone, knowin' the ould place, tuk ut up: so we called ut Silver's Theatre.

"The little orf'cer bhoy av the Tyrone was thremblin' an' cryin'. He had no heart for the Coort-martials that he talked so big upon. 'Ye'll do well later,' sez Crook, very quiet, 'for not bein' allowed to kill yourself for amusemint.'

"'I'm a dishgraced man!' sez the little orf'cer bhoy.

"'Put me undher arrest, Sorr, if you will, but, by my sowl, I'd do ut again sooner than face your mother wid you dead,' sez the Sargint that had sat on his head, standin' to attention an' salutin'. But the young wan only cried as tho' his little heart was breakin'.

"Thin another man av the Tyrone came up, wid the fog av fightin' on him."

"The what, Mulvaney?"

"Fog av fightin'. You know, Sorr, that, like makin' love, ut takes each man diff'rint. Now I can't help bein' powerful sick whin I'm in action. Orth'ris, here, niver stops swearin' from ind to ind, an' the only time that Learoyd opins his mouth to sing is whin he is messin' wid other people's heads;

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for he's a dhirty fighter is Jock. Recruities sometime cry, an' sometime they don't know fwhat they do, an' sometime they are all for cuttin' throats an' such like dhirtiness; but some men get heavy-dead-dhrunk on the fightin'. This man was. He was staggerin', an' his eyes were half shut, an' we cud hear him dhraw breath twinty yards away. He sees the little orf'cer bhoy, an' comes up, talkin' thick an' drowsy to himsilf. 'Blood the young whelp!' he sez; 'blood the young whelp'; an' wid that he threw up his arms, shpun roun', an' dropped at our feet, dead as a Paythan, an' there was niver sign or scratch on him. They said 'twas his heart was rotten, but oh, 'twas a quare thing to see!

"Thin we wint to bury our dead, for we wud not lave thim to the Paythans, an' in movin' among the haythen we nearly lost that little orf'cer bhoy. He was for givin' wan divil wather and layin' him aisy against a rock. 'Be careful, Sorr,' sez I; 'a wounded Paythan's worse than a live wan.' My troth, before the words was out of my mouth, the man on the ground fires at the orf'cer bhoy lanin' over him, an' I saw the helmit fly. I dropped the butt on the face av the man an' tuk his pistol. The little orf'cer bhoy turned very white, for the hair av half his head was singed away.

"'I tould you so, Sorr!' sez I; an', afther that, whin he wanted to help a Paythan I stud wid the

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muzzle contagious to the ear. They dare not do anythin' but curse. The Tyrone was growlin' like dogs over a bone that had been taken away too soon, for they had seen their dead an' they wanted to kill ivry sowl on the ground. Crook tould thim that he'd blow the hide off any man that misconducted himself; but, seeing that ut was the first time the Tyrone had iver seen their dead, I do not wondher they were on the sharp. 'Tis a shameful sight! Whin I first saw ut I wud niver ha' given quarter to any man north of the Khaibar — no, nor woman either, for the women used to come out afther dhark — Auggrh!

"Well, evenshually we buried our dead an' tuk away our wounded, an' come over the brow av the hills to see the Scotchies an' the Gurkys taking tay with the Paythans in bucketsfuls. We were a gang av dissolute ruffians, for the blood had caked the dust, an' the sweat had cut the cake, an' our bay'nits was hangin' like butchers' steels betune our legs, an' most av us were marked one way or another.

"A Staff Orf'cer man, clean as a new rifle, rides up an' sez: 'What damned scarecrows are you?'

"'A comp'ny av Her Majesty's Black Tyrone an' wan av the Ould Rig'mint,' sez Crook very quiet, givin' our visitor the flure as 'twas.

"'Oh!' sez the Staff Orf'cer; 'did you dislodge that Reserve?'

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"'No!' sez Crook, an' the Tyrone laughed.

"'Thin fwhat the divil have ye done?'

"'Disthroyed ut,' sez Crook, an' he took us on, but not before Toomey that was in the Tyrone sez aloud, his voice somewhere in his stummick: 'Fwhat in the name av misfortune does this parrit widout a tail mane by shtoppin' the road av his betthers?'

"The Staff Orf'cer wint blue, an' Toomey makes him pink by changin' to the voice av a minowderin' woman an' sayin': 'Come an' kiss me, Major dear, for me husband's at the wars an' I'm all alone at the Depôt.'

"The Staff Orf'cer wint away, an' I cud see Crook's shoulthers shakin'.

"His Corp'ril checks Toomey. 'Lave me alone,' sez Toomey, widout a wink. 'I was his bâtman before he was married, an' he knows fwhat I mane, av you don't. There's nothin' like livin' in the hoight av society.' D'you remimber that, Orth'ris?"

"Hi do. Toomey 'e died in 'orspital, next week it was, 'cause I bought 'arf his kit; an' I remember after that ——"

"GUARRD, TURN OUT!"

The Relief had come; it was four o'clock. "I'll catch a kyart for you, Sorr," said Mulvaney, diving hastily into his accoutrements. "Come up to the top av the Fort an' we'll pershue our invistigations

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into M'Grath's shtable." The relieved Guard strolled round the main bastion on its way to the swimming-bath, and Learoyd grew almost talkative. Ortheris looked into the Fort Ditch and across the plain. "Ho! it's weary waitin' for Ma-ary!" he hummed; "but I'd like to kill some more bloomin' Paythans before my time's up. War! Bloody war! North, East, South, and West."

"Amen!" said Learoyd slowly.

"Fwhat's here?" said Mulvaney, checking at a blur of white by the foot of the old sentry-box. He stooped and touched it. "It's Norah — Norah M'Taggart! Why, Nonie darlin', fwhat are ye doin' out av your mother's bed at this time?"

The two-year-old child of Sergeant M'Taggart must have wandered for a breath of cool air to the very verge of the parapet of the Fort Ditch. Her tiny night-shift was gathered into a wisp round her neck and she moaned in her sleep. "See there!" said Mulvaney; "poor lamb! Look at the heat-rash on the innocint skin av her. 'Tis hard — crool hard even for us. Fwhat must it be for these? Wake up, Nonie, your mother will be woild about you. Begad, the child might ha' fallen into the ditch!"

He picked her up in the growing light, and set her on his shoulder, and her fair curls touched the grizzled stubble of his temples. Ortheris and Lea-

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royd followed snapping their fingers, while Norah smiled at them a sleepy smile. Then carolled Mulvaney, clear as a lark, dancing the baby on his arm —

"If any young man should marry you,
Say nothin' about the joke;
That iver ye slep' in a sinthry-box,
Wrapped up in a soldier's cloak.

"Though, on me sowl, Nonie," he said gravely, "there was not much cloak about you. Niver mind, you won't dhress like this ten years to come. Kiss your friends an' run along to your mother."

Nonie, set down close to the Married Quarters, nodded with the quiet obedience of the soldier's child, but, ere she pattered off over the flagged path, held up her lips to be kissed by the Three Musketeers. Ortheris wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and swore sentimentally; Learoyd turned pink; and the two walked away together. The Yorkshireman lifted up his voice and gave in thunder the chorus of "The Sentry-Box," while Ortheris piped at his side.

"'Bin to a bloomin' sing-song, you two?" said the Artilleryman, who was taking his cartridge down to the Morning Gun. "You're over-merry for these dashed days."

"I bid ye take care o' the brat, said he,
For it comes of a noble race,"

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Learoyd bellowed. The voices died out in the swimming-bath.

"Oh, Terence!" I said, dropping into Mulvaney's speech, when we were alone, "it's you that have the Tongue!"

He looked at me wearily; his eyes were sunk in his head, and his face was drawn and white. "Eyah!" said he; "I've blandandhered thim through the night somehow, but can thim that helps others help thimselves? Answer me that, Sorr!"

And over the bastions of Fort Amara broke the pitiless day.

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BLACK JACK

To the wake av Tim O'Hara
Came company,
All St. Patrick's Alley
Was there to see.

Robert Buchanan.

As the Three Musketeers share their silver, tobacco, and liquor together, as they protect each other in barracks or camp, and as they rejoice together over the joy of one, so do they divide their sorrows. When Ortheris's irrepressible tongue has brought him into cells for a season, or Learoyd has run amok through his kit and accoutrements, or Mulvaney has indulged in strong waters, and under their influence reproved his Commanding Officer, you can see the trouble in the faces of the untouched two. And the rest of the regiment know that comment or jest is unsafe. Generally the three avoid Orderly Room and the Corner Shop that follows, leaving both to the young bloods who have not sown their wild oats; but there are occasions ——

For instance, Ortheris was sitting on the drawbridge of the main gate of Fort Amara, with his

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hands in his pockets and his pipe, bowl down, in his mouth. Learoyd was lying at full length on the turf of the glacis, kicking his heels in the air, and I came round the corner and asked for Mulvaney.

Ortheris spat into the ditch and shook his head. "No good seein' 'im now," said Ortheris; "'e's a bloomin' camel. Listen."

I heard on the flags of the verandah opposite to the cells, which are close to the Guard-Room, a measured step that I could have identified in the tramp of an army. There were twenty paces *crescendo*, a pause, and then twenty *diminuendo*.

"That's 'im," said Ortheris; "my Gawd, that's 'im! All for a bloomin' button you could see your face in an' a bit o' lip that a bloomin' Hark-angel would 'a' guv back."

Mulvaney was doing pack-drill—was compelled, that is to say, to walk up and down for certain hours in full marching order, with rifle, bayonet, ammunition, knapsack, and overcoat. And his offence was being dirty on parade! I nearly fell into the Fort Ditch with astonishment and wrath, for Mulvaney is the smartest man that ever mounted guard, and would as soon think of turning out uncleanly as of dispensing with his trousers.

"Who was the Sergeant that checked him?" I asked.

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"Mullins, o' course," said Ortheris. "There ain't no other man would whip 'im on the peg so. But Mullins ain't a man. 'E's a dirty little pig-scraper, that's wot 'e is."

"What did Mulvaney say? He's not the make of man to take that quietly."

"Said! Bin better for 'im if 'e'd shut 'is mouth. Lord, 'ow we laughed! 'Sargint,' 'e sez, 'ye say I'm dirty. Well,' sez 'e, 'when your wife lets you blow your own nose for yourself, perhaps you'll know wot dirt is. You're himperfectly eddicated, Sargint,' sez 'e, an' then we fell in. But after p'rade 'e was up an' Mullins was swearin' 'imself black in the face at Ord'ly Room that Mulvaney 'ad called 'im a swine an' Lord knows wot all. You know Mullins. 'E'll 'ave 'is 'ead broke in one o' these days. 'E's too big a bloomin' liar for ord'nary consumption. 'Three hours' can an' kit,' sez the Colonel; 'not for bein' dirty on p'rade, but for 'avin' said somethin' to Mullins, tho' I do not believe,' sez 'e, 'you said wot 'e said you said.' An' Mulvaney fell away sayin' nothin'. You know 'e never speaks to the Colonel for fear o' gettin' 'imself fresh copped."

Mullins, a very young and very much married Sergeant, whose manners were partly the result of innate depravity and partly of imperfectly digested Board School, came over the bridge, and most rudely asked Ortheris what he was doing.

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"Me?" said Ortheris. "Ow! I'm waiting for my C'mission. 'Seed it comin' along yit?"

Mullins turned purple and passed on. There was the sound of a gentle chuckle from the glacis where Learoyd lay.

"'E expects to get 'is C'mission some day," explained Orth'ris; "Gawd 'elp the Mess that 'ave to put their 'ands into the same kiddy as 'im! Wot time d'you make it, Sir? Fower! Mulvaney 'll be out in 'arf an hour. You don't want to buy a dorg, Sir, do you? A pup you can trust —'arf Rampore by the Colonel's grey'ound."

"Ortheris," I answered sternly, for I knew what was in his mind, "do you mean to say that——"

"I didn't mean to arx money o' you, any'ow," said Ortheris; "I'd 'a' sold you the dorg good an' cheap, but—but—I know Mulvaney 'll want somethin' after we've walked 'im orf, an' I ain't got nothin', nor 'e 'asn't neither. I'd sooner sell you the dorg, Sir. 'S trewth I would!"

A shadow fell on the drawbridge, and Ortheris began to rise into the air, lifted by a huge hand upon his collar.

"Onything but t' braass," said Learoyd, quietly, as he held the Londoner over the ditch. "Onything but t' braass, Orth'ris, ma son! Ah've got one rupee eight annas of ma own." He showed two coins, and replaced Ortheris on the drawbridge rail.

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"Very good," I said; "where are you going to?"

"Goin' to walk 'im orf w'en he comes out — two miles or three or fower," said Ortheris.

The footsteps within ceased. I heard the dull thud of a knapsack falling on a bedstead, followed by the rattle of arms. Ten minutes later, Mulvaney, faultlessly dressed, his lips tight and his face as black as a thunderstorm, stalked into the sunshine on the drawbridge. Learoyd and Ortheris sprang from my side and closed in upon him, both leaning towards as horses lean upon the pole. In an instant they had disappeared down the sunken road to the cantonments, and I was left alone. Mulvaney had not seen fit to recognise me; so I knew that his trouble must be heavy upon him.

I climbed one of the bastions and watched the figures of the Three Musketeers grow smaller and smaller across the plain. They were walking as fast as they could put foot to the ground, and their heads were bowed. They fetched a great compass round the parade-ground, skirted the Cavalry lines, and vanished in the belt of trees that fringes the low land by the river.

I followed slowly, and sighted them — dusty, sweating, but still keeping up their long, swinging tramp — on the river bank. They crashed through the Forest Reserve, headed towards the Bridge of Boats, and presently established themselves on the bow of one of the pontoons. I rode cautiously

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till I saw three puffs of white smoke rise and die out in the clear evening air, and knew that peace had come again. At the bridge-head they waved me forward with gestures of welcome.

"Tie up your 'orse," shouted Ortheris, "an' come on, Sir. We're all goin' 'ome in this 'ere bloomin' boat."

From the bridge-head to the Forest Officer's bungalow is but a step. The mess-man was there, and would see that a man held my horse. Did the Sahib require aught else — a peg, or beer? Ritchie Sahib had left half a dozen bottles of the latter, but since the Sahib was a friend of Ritchie Sahib, and he, the mess-man, was a poor man ——

I gave my order quietly, and returned to the bridge. Mulvaney had taken off his boots, and was dabbling his toes in the water; Learoyd was lying on his back on the pontoon; and Ortheris was pretending to row with a big bamboo.

"I'm an ould fool," said Mulvaney, reflectively, "dhraggin' you two out here bekaze I was undher the Black Dog — sulkin' like a child. Me that was soldierin' when Mullins, an' be damned to him, was shquealin' on a counterpin for five shillin' a week — an' that not paid! Bhoys, I've took you five miles out av natural pervarsity. Phew!"

"Wot's the odds so long as you're 'appy?" said Ortheris, applying himself afresh to the bamboo. "As well 'ere as anywhere else."

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Learoyd held up a rupee and an eight-anna bit, and shook his head sorrowfully. "Five mile from t' Canteen, all along o' Mulvaaney's blaasted pride."

"I know ut," said Mulvaney penitently. "Why will ye come wid me? An' yet I wud be mortial sorry if ye did not — any time — though I am ould enough to know betther. But I will do penance. I will take a dhrink av wather."

Ortheris squeaked shrilly. The butler of the Forest bungalow was standing near the railings with a basket, uncertain how to clamber down to the pontoon. "Might 'a' know'd you'd 'a' got liquor out o' bloomin' desert, Sir," said Ortheris, gracefully, to me. Then to the mess-man: "Easy with them there bottles. They're worth their weight in gold. Jock, ye long-armed beggar, get out o' that an' hike 'em down."

Learoyd had the basket on the pontoon in an instant, and the Three Musketeers gathered round it with dry lips. They drank my health in due and ancient form, and thereafter tobacco tasted sweeter than ever. They absorbed all the beer, and disposed themselves in picturesque attitudes to admire the setting sun — no man speaking for a while.

Mulvaney's head dropped upon his chest, and we thought that he was asleep.

"What on earth did you come so far for?" I whispered to Ortheris.

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"To walk 'im orf, o' course. When 'e's been checked we allus walks 'im orf. 'E ain't fit to be spoke to those times — nor 'e ain't fit to leave alone neither. So we takes 'im till 'e is."

Mulvaney raised his head, and stared straight into the sunset. "I had my rifle," said he dreamily, "an' I had my bay'nit, an' Mullins came round the corner, an' he looked in my face an' grinned dishpiteful. '*You* can't blow your own nose,' sez he. Now, I cannot tell fwhat Mullins's expayrience may ha' been, but, Mother av God, he was nearer to his death that minut' than I have iver been to mine — and that's less than the thicknuss av a hair!"

"Yes," said Ortheris calmly, "you'd look fine with all your buttons took orf, an' the Band in front o' you, walkin' roun' slow time. We're both front-rank men, me an' Jock, when the rig-'ment's in 'ollow square. Bloomin' fine you'd look. 'The Lord giveth an' the Lord taketh awai,— Heasy with that there drop!—Blessed be the naime o' the Lord,'" he gulped in a quaint and suggestive fashion.

"Mullins! Wot's Mullins?" said Learoyd slowly. "Ah'd take a coomp'ny o' Mullinses—ma hand behind me. Sitha, Mulvaaney, don't be a fool."

"*You* were not checked for fwhat you did not do, an' made a mock av afther. 'Twas for less

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than that the Tyrone wud ha' sent O'Hara to hell, instid av lettin' him go by his own choosin', whin Rafferty shot him," retorted Mulvaney.

"And who stopped the Tyrone from doing it?" I asked.

"That ould fool who's sorry he didn't shtick the pig Mullins." His head dropped again. When he raised it he shivered and put his hands on the shoulders of his two companions.

"Ye've walked the divil out av me, bhoys," said he.

Ortheris shot out the red-hot dottle of his pipe on the back of the hairy fist. "They say 'Ell's 'otter than that," said he, as Mulvaney swore aloud. "You be warned so. Look yonder!"—he pointed across the river to a ruined temple — "Me an' you an '*im*" — he indicated me by a jerk of his head — "was there one day when Hi made a bloomin' show o' myself. You an' 'im stopped me doin' such — an Hi was on'y wishful for to desert. You are makin' a bigger bloomin' show o' yourself now."

"Don't mind him, Mulvaney," I said; "Dinah Shadd won't let you hang yourself yet awhile, and you don't intend to try it either. Let's hear about the Tyrone and O'Hara. Rafferty shot him for fooling with his wife. What happened before that?"

"There's no fool like an ould fool. You know you can do anythin' wid me whin I'm talkin'. Did

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I say I wud like to cut Mullins's liver out? I deny the imputashin, for fear that Orth'ris here wud report me — Ah! You wud tip me into the river, wud you? Sit quiet, little man. Anyways, Mullins is not worth the throuble av an extry p'rade, an' I will trate him wid outrajis contimpt. The Tyrone an' O'Hara! O'Hara an' the Tyrone, begad! Ould days are hard to bring back into the mouth, but they're always inside the head."

Followed a long pause.

"O'Hara was a divil. Though I saved him, for the honour av the rig'mint, from his death that time, I say it now. He was a divil — a long, bould, black-haired divil."

"Which way?" asked Ortheris.

"Women."

"Then I know another."

"Not more than in r'ason, if you mane me, ye warped walkin'-shtick. I have been young, an' for why should I not have tuk what I cud? Did I iver, whin I was Corp'ril, use the rise av my rank — wan step an' that taken away, more's the sorrow an' the fault av me! — to prosecute a nefarious inthrigue, as O'Hara did? Did I, whin I was Corp'ril, lay my spite upon a man an' make his life a dog's life from day to day? Did I lie, as O'Hara lied, till the young wans in the Tyrone turned white wid the fear av the Judgment av God killin' thim all in a lump, as ut killed the

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woman at Devizes? I did not! I have sinned my sins an' I have made my confesshin, an' Father Victor knows the worst av me. O'Hara was tuk, before he cud spake, on Rafferty's doorstep, an' no man knows the worst av him. But this much I know!

"The Tyrone was recruited any fashion in the ould days. A draf' from Connemara — a draf' from Portsmouth — a draf' from Kerry, an' that was a blazin' bad draf' — here, there and iverywhere — but the large av thim was Oirish — Black Oirish. Now there are Oirish an' Oirish. The good are good as the best, but the bad are wurrst than the wurrst. 'Tis this way. They clog together in pieces as fast as thieves, an' no wan knows fwhat they will do till wan turns informer an' the gang is bruk. But ut begins again, a day later, meetin' in holes an' corners an' swearin' bloody oaths an' shtickin' a man in the back an' runnin' away, an' thin waitin' for the blood-money on the reward papers — to see if ut's worth enough. Those are the Black Oirish, an' 'tis they that bring dishgrace upon the name av Oireland, an' thim I wud kill — as I nearly killed wan wanst.

"But to reshume. My room — 'twas before I was married — was wid twelve av the scum av the earth — the pickin's av the gutter — mane men that wud neither laugh nor talk nor yet get dhrunk as a man shud. They thried some av

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their dog's thricks on me, but I dhrew a line round my cot, an' the man that thransgressed ut wint into hospital for three days good.

"O'Hara had put his spite on the room — he was my Colour-Sargint — an' nothin' cud we do to plaze him. I was younger than I am now, an' I tuk what I got in the way av dressin'-dhown and punishmint-dhrill wid my tongue in my cheek. But it was diff'rint wid the others, an' why I cannot say, excipt that some men are borrun mane an' go to dhirty murdher where a fist is more than enough. After a whoile they changed their chune to me an' was desp'rit frien'ly — all twelve av thim cursin' O'Hara in chorus.

"'Eyah,' sez I, 'O'Hara's a divil, an' I'm not for denyin' ut, but is he the only man in the wurruld? Let him go. He'll get tired av findin' our kit foul an' our 'coutrements onproperly kep'.'

"'We will *not* let him go,' sez they.

"'Thin take him,' sez I, 'an' a dashed poor yield you will get for your throuble.'

"'Is he not misconductin' himself wid Slimmy's wife?' sez another.

"'She's common to the rig'mint,' sez I. 'Fwhat has made ye this partic'lar on a suddint?'

"'Has he not put his spite on the roomful av us? Can we do anythin' that he will not check us for?' sez another.

"'That's thrue,' sez I.

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"'Will ye not help us to do aught,' sez another — 'a big bould man like you?'

"'I will break his head upon his shoulthers av he puts hand on me,' sez I. 'I will give him the lie av he says that I'm dhirty, an' I wud not mind duckin' him in the Artillery troughs if ut was not that I'm thryin' for my shtripes.'

"'Is that all ye will do?' sez another. 'Have ye no more spunk than that, ye blood-dhrawn calf?'

"'Blood-dhrawn I may be,' sez I, gettin' back to my cot an' makin' my line round ut; 'but ye know that the man who comes acrost this mark will be more blood-dhrawn than me. No man gives me the name in my mouth,' I sez. 'Ondherstand, I will have no part wid you in anythin' ye do, nor will I raise my fist to my shuparior. Is any wan comin' on?' sez I.

"They made no move, tho' I gave them full time, but stud growlin' an' snarlin' together at wan ind av the room. I tuk up my cap and wint out to Canteen, thinkin' no little av mesilf, and there I grew most ondacintly dhrunk in my legs. My head was all reasonable.

"'Houligan,' I sez to a man in E Comp'ny that was by way av bein' a frind av mine; 'I'm overtuk from the belt down. Do you give me the touch av your shoulther to presarve my formation an' march me acrost the ground into the high grass.

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I'll sleep ut off there,' sez I; an' Houligan — he's dead now, but good he was while he lasted — walked wid me, givin' me the touch whin I wint wide, ontil we came to the high grass, an', my faith, the sky an' the earth was fair rowlin' undher me. I made for where the grass was the thickust, an' there I slep' off my liquor wid an easy conscience. I did not desire to come on books too frequent; my characther havin' been shpotless for the good half av a year.

"Whin I roused, the dhrink was dyin' out in me, an' I felt as though a she-cat had littered in my mouth. I had not learned to hould my liquor wid comfort in thim days. 'Tis little betther I am now. 'I will get Houligan to pour a bucket over my head,' thinks I, an' I wud ha' risen, but I heard some wan say: 'Mulvaney can take the blame av ut for the backslidin' hound he is.'

"'Oho!' sez I, an' my head rang like a guard-room gong: 'fwhat is the blame that this young man must take to oblige Tim Vulmea?' For 'twas Tim Vulmea that shpoke.

"I turned on my belly an' crawled through the grass, a bit at a time, to where the spache came from. There was the twelve av my room sittin' down in a little patch, the dhry grass wavin' above their heads an' the sin av black murdher in their hearts. I put the stuff aside to get a clear view.

"'Fwhat's that?' sez wan man, jumpin' up.

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"'A dog,' says Vulmea. 'You're a nice hand to this job! As I said, Mulvaney will take the blame—av ut comes to a pinch.'

"''Tis harrd to swear a man's life away,' sez a young wan.

"'Thank ye for that,' thinks I. 'Now, fwhat the divil are you paragins conthrivin' against me?'

"''Tis as aisy as dhrinkin' your quart,' sez Vulmea. 'At seven or thereon, O'Hara will come acrost to the Married Quarters, goin' to call on Slimmy's wife, the swine! Wan av us'll pass the wurrd to the room, an' we shtart the divil an' all av a shine—laughin' an' crackin' on an' t'rowin' our boots about. Thin O'Hara will come to give us the ordher to be quiet, the more by token bekaze the room lamp will be knocked over in the larkin'. He will take the straight road to the ind door where there's the lamp in the verandah, an' that'll bring him clear against the light as he shtands. He will not be able to look into the dhark. Wan av us will loose off, an' a close shot ut will be, an' shame to the man that misses. 'Twill be Mulvaney's rifle, she that is at the head av the rack—there's no mistakin' that long-shtocked, cross-eyed bitch even in the dhark.'

"The thief misnamed my ould firin'-piece out av jealousy—I was pershuaded av that—an' ut made me more angry than all.

"But Vulmea goes on: 'O'Hara will dhrop,

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an' by the time the light's lit again, there'll be some six av us on the chest av Mulvaney, cryin' murdher an' rape. Mulvaney's cot is near the ind door, an' the shmokin' rifle will be lyin' undher him whin we've knocked him over. We know, an' all the rig'mint knows, that Mulvaney has given O'Hara more lip than any man av us. Will there be any doubt at the Coort-Martial? Wud twelve honust sodger-bhoys swear away the life av a dear, quiet, swate-timpered man such as is Mulvaney—wid his line av pipe-clay roun' his cot, threatenin' us wid murdher av we overshtepped ut, as we can truthful testify?'

"'Mary, Mother av Mercy!' thinks I to mesilf; 'ut is this to have an unruly mimber an' fistes fit to use! Oh the sneakin' hounds!'

"The big dhrops ran down my face, for I was wake wid the liquor an' had not the full av my wits about me. I laid shtill an' heard thim workin' themselves up to swear my life by tellin' tales av ivry time I had put my mark on wan or another; an', my faith, they was few that was not so dishtinguished. 'Twas all in the way av fair fight, though, for niver did I raise my hand excipt whin they had provoked me to ut.

"'''Tis all well,' sez wan av thim, 'but who's to do this shootin'?'

"'Fwhat matther?' sez Vulmea. ''Tis Mulvaney will do that—at the Coort-Martial.'

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"'He will so,' sez the man, 'but whose hand is put to the thrigger — *in the room?*'

"'Who'll do ut?' sez Vulmea, lookin' round, but divil a man answered. They began to dishpute till Kiss, that was always playin' Shpoil Five, sez: 'Thry the kyards!' Wid that he opined his tunic an' tuk out the greasy palammers, an' they all fell in wid the notion.

"'Deal on!' sez Vulmea, wid a big rattlin' oath, 'an' the Black Curse av Shielygh come to the man that will not do his duty as the kyards say. Amin!'

"'Black Jack is the masther,' sez Kiss, dealin'. Black Jack, Sorr, I shud expaytiate to you, is the Ace av Shpades, which from time immimorial has has been intimately connect' wid battle, murdher an' suddin death.

"*Wanst* Kiss dealt, an' there was no sign, but the men was whoite wid the workin's av their sowls. *Twice* Kiss dealt, an' there was a gray shine on their cheeks like the mess av an egg. *Three* times Kiss dealt, an' they was blue. 'Have ye not lost him?' sez Vulmea, wipin' the sweat on him; 'Let's ha' done quick!' 'Quick ut is,' sez Kiss t'rowin' him the kyard; an' ut fell face up on his knee — Black Jack!

"Thin they all cackled wid laughin'. 'Duty thrippence,' sez wan av thim, 'an' damned cheap at that price!' But I cud see they all dhrew a little away from Vulmea an' lef' him sittin' playin'

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wid the kyard. Vulmea sez no word for a whoile, but licked his lips — cat-ways. Thin he threw up his head an' made the men swear by ivry oath known to stand by him not alone in the room, but at the Coort-Martial that was to set on *me!* He tould off five av the biggest to stretch me on my cot whin the shot was fired, an' another man he tould off to put out the light, an' yet another to load my rifle. He wud not do that himself; an' that was quare, for 'twas but a little thing considherin'.

"Thin they swore over again that they wud not bethray wan another, an' crep' out av the grass in diff'rint ways, two by two. A mercy ut was that they did not come on me. I was sick wid fear in the pit av my stummick — sick, sick, sick! Afther they was all gone, I wint back to Canteen an' called for a quart to put a thought in me. Vulmea was there, dhrinkin' heavy, an' politeful to me beyond reason. 'Fwhat will I do — fwhat will I do?' thinks I to mesilf whin Vulmea wint away.

"Presintly the Arm'rer Sargint comes in stiffin' an' crackin' on, not pleased wid any wan, bekaze the Martini-Henry bein' new to the rig'mint in those days we used to play the mischief wid her arrangemints. 'Twas a long time before I cud get out av the way av thryin' to pull back the back-sight an' turnin' her over afther firin'— as if she was a Snider.

"'Fwhat tailor-men do they give me to work

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wid?' sez the Arm'rer Sargint. 'Here's Hogan, his nose flat as a table, laid by for a week, an' ivry Comp'ny sendin' their arrums in knocked to small shivreens.'

"'Fwhat's wrong wid Hogan, Sargint?' sez I.

"'Wrong!' sez the Arm'rer Sargint; 'I showed him, as though I had been his mother, the way av shtrippin' a 'Tini, an' he shtrup her clane an' aisy. I tould him to put her to again an' fire a blank into the blow-pit to show how the dhirt hung on the groovin'. He did that, but he did not put in the pin av the fallin'-block, an' av coorse whin he fired he was strook by the block jumpin' clear. Well for him 'twas but a blank — a full charge wud ha' cut his oi out.'

"I looked a thrifle wiser than a boiled sheep's head. 'How's that, Sargint?' sez I.

"'This way, ye blundherin' man, an' don't you be doin' ut,' sez he. Wid that he shows me a Waster action — the breech av her all cut away to show the inside — an' so plazed he was to grumble that he dimonstrated fwhat Hogan had done twice over. 'An' that comes av not knowin' the wepping you're purvided wid,' sez he.

"'Thank ye, Sargint,' sez I; 'I will come to you again for further information.'

"'Ye will not,' sez he. 'Kape your clanin'-rod away from the breech-pin, or you will get into throuble.'

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"I wint outside, an' I could ha' danced wid delight for the grandeur av ut. 'They will load my rifle, good luck to thim, whoile I'm away,' thinks I, and back I wint to the Canteen to give thim their clear chanst.

"The Canteen was fillin' wid men at the ind av the day. I made feign to be far gone in dhrink, an', wan by wan, all my roomful came in wid Vulmea. I wint away, walkin' thick an' heavy, but not so thick an' heavy that any wan cud ha' tuk me. Sure and thrue, there was a kyartridge gone from my pouch an' lyin' snug in my rifle. I was hot wid rage against thim all, an' I worried the bullet out wid my teeth as fast as I cud, the room bein' empty. Then I tuk my boot an' the clanin'-rod and knocked out the pin av the fallin'-block. Oh, 'twas music when that pin rowled on the flure! I put ut into my pouch an' sthuck a dab av dirt on the holes in the plate, puttin' the fallin'-block back. 'That'll do your business, Vulmea,' sez I, lyin' easy on the cot. 'Come an' sit on my chest the whole room av you, an' I will take you to my bosom for the biggest divils that iver chated halter.' I wud have no mercy on Vulmea. His oi or his life — little I cared.

"At dusk they came back, the twelve av thim, an' they had all been dhrinkin'. I was shammin' sleep on the cot. Wan man wint outside in the verandah. Whin he whishtled they began to rage

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roun' the room an' carry on tremenjus. But I niver want to hear men laugh as they did — sky-larkin' too! 'Twas like mad jackals.

"'Shtop that blasted noise!' sez O'Hara in the dark, an' pop goes the room lamp. I cud hear O'Hara runnin' up, an' the rattlin' av my rifle in the rack, an' the men breathin' heavy as they stud roun' my cot. I cud see O'Hara in the light av the verandah lamp, an' thin I heard the crack av my rifle. She cried loud, poor darlint, bein' mis-handled. Next minut' five men were houldin' me down. 'Go aisy,' I sez; 'fwhat's ut all about?'

"Thin Vulmea, on the flure, raised a howl you cud hear from wan ind av cantonmints to the other. 'I'm dead, I'm butchered, I'm blind!' sez he. 'Saints have mercy on my sinful sowl! Sind for Father Constant! Oh sind for Father Constant an' let me go clean!' By that I knew he was not so dead as I could ha' wished.

"O'Hara picks up the lamp in the verandah wid a hand as stiddy as a rest. 'Fwhat damned dog's thrick is this av yours?' sez he, and turns the light on Tim Vulmea that was shwimmin' in blood from top to toe. The fallin'-block had sprung free behin' a full charge av powther — good care I tuk to bite down the brass afther takin' out the bullet, that there might be somethin' to give ut full worth — an' had cut Tim from the lip to the corner av the right eye, lavin' the eyelid in tatthers, an' so

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up an' along by the forehead to the hair. 'Twas more av a rakin' plough, if you will ondherstand, than a clane cut; an' niver did I see a man bleed as Vulmea did. The dhrink an' the stew that he was in pumped the blood strong. The minut' the men sittin' on my chest heard O'Hara spakin' they scatthered, each wan to his cot, an' cried out very politeful: 'Fwhat is ut, Sargint?'

"'Fwhat is ut!' sez O'Hara, shakin' Tim. 'Well an' good do you know fwhat ut is, ye skulkin' ditch-lurkin' dogs! Get a *doolie*, an' take this whimperin' scutt away. There will be more heard av ut than any av you will care for.'

"Vulmea sat up rockin' his head in his hand an' moanin' for Father Constant.

"'Be done!' sez O'Hara, dhraggin' him up by the hair. 'You're none so dead that you cannot go fifteen years for thryin' to shoot me.'

"'I did not,' sez Vulmea; 'I was shootin' mesilf.'

"'That's quare,' sez O'Hara, 'for the front av my jackut is black wid your powther.' He tuk up the rifle that was still warm, an' began to laugh. 'I'll make your life Hell to you,' sez he, 'for attempted murdher an' kapin' your rifle onproperly. You'll be hanged first an' thin put undher stoppages for four fifteen. The rifle's done for,' sez he.

"'Why, 'tis my rifle!' sez I, comin' up to

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look; 'Vulmea, ye divil, fwhat were you doin' wid her — answer me that?'

"'Lave me alone,' sez Vulmea; 'I'm dyin'!'

"'I'll wait till you're betther,' sez I, 'an' thin we two will talk ut out umbrageous.'

"O'Hara pitched Tim into the *doolie*, none too tinder, but all the bhoys kep' by their cots, which was not the sign av innocent men. I was huntin' ivrywhere for my fallin'-block, but not findin' ut at all. I niver found ut.

"'*Now* fwhat will I do?' sez O'Hara, swinging the verandah light in his hand an' lookin' down the room. I had hate and contimpt av O'Hara, an' I have now, dead tho' he is, but, for all that, will I say he was a brave man. He is baskin' in Purgathory this tide, but I wish he cud hear that, whin he stud lookin' down the room an' the bhoys shivered before the oi av him, I knew him for a brave man, an' I liked him *so*.

"'Fwhat will I do?' sez O'Hara agin, an' we heard the voice av a woman low an' sof' in the verandah. 'Twas Slimmy's wife, come over at the shot, sittin' on wan av the benches an' scarce able to walk.

"'O Denny! — Denny, dear,' sez she, 'have they kilt you?'

"O'Hara looked down the room again an' showed his teeth to the gum. Then he spat on the flure.

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"'You're not worth ut,' sez he. 'Light that lamp, ye dogs,' an' wid that he turned away, an' I saw him walkin' off wid Slimmy's wife; she thryin' to wipe off the powther-black on the front av his jackut wid her handkerchief. 'A brave man you are,' thinks I—'a brave man an' a bad woman.'

"No wan said a word for a time. They was all ashamed past spache.

"'Fwhat d'you think he will do?' sez wan av thim at last. 'He knows we're all in ut.'

"'Are we so?' sez I from my cot. 'The man that sez that to me will be hurt. I do not know,' sez I, 'fwhat onderhand divilmint you have conthrived, but by what I've seen I know that you cannot commit murdher wid another man's rifle—such shakin' cowards you are. I'm goin' to slape,' I sez, 'an' you can blow my head off whoile I lay.' I did not slape, though, for a long time. Can ye wonder?

"Next morn the news was through all the rig'mint, an' there was nothin' that the men did not tell. O'Hara reports, fair an' easy, that Vulmea was come to grief through tamperin' wid his rifle in barricks, all for to show the mechanism. An' by my sowl, he had the impart'nince to say that he was on the shpot at the time an' cud certify that ut was an accidint! You might ha' knocked my roomful down wid a straw whin they heard

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that. 'Twas lucky for thim that the bhoys were always thryin' to find out how the new rifle was made, an' a lot av thim had come up for easin' the pull by shtickin' bits av grass an' such in the part av the lock that showed near the thrigger. The first issues of the 'Tinis was not covered in, an' I mesilf have eased the pull av mine time an' agin. A light pull is ten points on the range to me.

"'I will not have this foolishness!' sez the Colonel. 'I will twist the tail off Vulmea!' sez he; but whin he saw him, all tied up an' groanin' in hospital, he changed his will. 'Make him an early convalescint,' sez he to the Doctor, an' Vulmea was made so for a warnin'. His big bloody bandages an' face puckered up to wan side did more to kape the bhoys from messin' wid the insides av their rifles than any punishmint.

"O'Hara gave no reason for fwhat he'd said, an' all my roomful were too glad to inquire, tho' he put his spite upon thim more wearin' than before. Wan day, howiver, he tuk me apart very polite, for he cud be that at the choosin'.

"'You're a good sodger, tho' you're a damned insolint man,' sez he.

"'Fair words, Sargint,' sez I, 'or I may be insolint again.'

"''Tis not like you,' sez he, 'to lave your rifle in the rack widout the breech-pin, for widout the breech-pin she was whin Vulmea fired. I should

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ha' found the break av ut in the eyes av the holes, else,' he sez.

"'Sargint,' sez I, 'fwhat wud your life ha' been worth av the breech-pin had been in place — for, on my sowl, my life wud be worth just as much to me av I tould you whether ut was or was not. Be thankful the bullet was not there,' I sez.

"'That's thrue,' sez he, pulling his moustache; 'but I do not believe that you, for all your lip, was in that business.'

"'Sargint,' sez I, 'I cud hammer the life out av a man in ten minuts wid my fistes if that man dish-pleased me; for I am a good sodger, an' I will be threated as such, an' whoile my fistes are my own they're strong enough for all work I have to do. They do not fly back towards me!' sez I, lookin' him betune the eyes.

"'You're a good man,' sez he, lookin' me betune the eyes — an' oh he was a gran'-built man to see! — 'you're a good man,' he sez, 'an' I cud wish, for the pure frolic av ut, that I wus not a Sargint, or that you were not a Privit; an' you will think me no coward whin I say this thing.'

"'I do not,' sez I. 'I saw you whin Vulmea mishandled the rifle. But, Sargint,' I sez, 'take the wurrd from me now, spakin' as man to man wid the shtripes off, tho' 'tis little right I have to talk, me bein' fwhat I am by natur'. This time ye tuk no harm, an' next time ye may not, but, in

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the ind, so sure as Slimmy's wife came into the verandah, so sure will ye take harm — an' bad harm. Have thought, Sargint,' sez I. 'Is ut worth ut?'

"'Ye're a bould man,' sez he, breathin' harrd. 'A very bould man. But I am a bould man tu. Do you go your way, Privit Mulvaney, an' I will go mine.'

"We had no further spache thin or afther, but, wan by another, he drafted the twelve av my room out into other rooms an' got thim spread among the Comp'nies, for they was not a good breed to live together, an' the Comp'ny orf'cers saw ut. They wud ha' shot me in the night av they had known fwhat I knew; but that they did not.

"An', in the ind, as I said, O'Hara met his death from Rafferty for foolin' wid his wife. He wint his own way too well — Eyah, too well! Shtraight to that affair, widout turnin' to the right or to the lef', he wint, an' may the Lord have mercy on his sowl. Amin!"

"'Ear! 'Ear!" said Ortheris, pointing the moral with a wave of his pipe. "An' this is 'im 'oo would be a bloomin' Vulmea all for the sake of Mullins an' a bloomin' button! Mullins never went after a woman in his life. Mrs. Mullins, she saw 'im one day ——"

"Ortheris," I said, hastily, for the romances of Private Ortheris are all too daring for publication, "look at the sun. It's a quarter past six!"

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"O Lord! Three quarters of an hour for five an' a 'arf miles! We'll 'ave to run like Jimmy O."

The Three Musketeers clambered on to the bridge, and departed hastily in the direction of the cantonment road. When I overtook them I offered them two stirrups and a tail, which they accepted enthusiastically. Ortheris held the tail, and in this manner we trotted steadily through the shadows by an unfrequented road.

At the turn into the cantonments we heard carriage wheels. It was the Colonel's barouche, and in it sat the Colonel's wife and daughter. I caught a suppressed chuckle, and my beast sprang forward with a lighter step.

The Three Musketeers had vanished into the night.

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ON GREENHOW HILL

To Love's low voice she lent a careless ear;
Her hand within his rosy fingers lay,
A chilling weight. She would not turn or hear;
But with averted face went on her way.
But when pale Death, all featureless and grim,
Lifted his bony hand, and beckoning
Held out his cypress-wreath, she followed him,
And Love was left forlorn and wondering,
That she who for his bidding would not stay,
At Death's first whisper rose and went away.

Rivals.

"*Obé, Ahmed Din! Shafiz Ullah aboo!* Bahadur Khan, where are you? Come out of the tents, as I have done, and fight against the English. Don't kill your own kin! Come out to me!"

The deserter from a native corps was crawling round the outskirts of the camp, firing at intervals, and shouting invitations to his old comrades. Misled by the rain and the darkness, he came to the English wing of the camp, and with his yelping and rifle-practice disturbed the men. They had been making roads all day, and were tired.

Ortheris was sleeping at Learoyd's feet. "Wot's all that?" he said thickly. Learoyd snored, and

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a Snider bullet ripped its way through the tent wall. The men swore. "It's that bloomin' deserter from the Aurangabadis," said Ortheris. "Git up, some one, an' tell 'im 'e's come to the wrong shop."

"Go to sleep, little man," said Mulvaney, who was steaming nearest the door. "I can't arise an' expaytiate with him. 'Tis rainin' entrenchin' tools outside."

"'Tain't because you bloomin' can't. It's 'cause you bloomin' won't, ye long, limp, lousy, lazy beggar, you. 'Ark to 'im 'owlin'!"

"Wot's the good of argifying? Put a bullet into the swine! 'E's keepin' us awake!" said another voice.

A subaltern shouted angrily, and a dripping sentry whined from the darkness—

"'Tain't no good, sir. I can't see 'im. 'E's 'idin' somewhere down 'ill."

Ortheris tumbled out of his blanket. "Shall I try to get 'im, sir?" said he.

"No," was the answer. "Lie down. I won't have the whole camp shooting all round the clock. Tell him to go and pot his friends."

Ortheris considered for a moment. Then, putting his head under the tent wall, he called, as a 'bus conductor calls in a block, "'Igher up, there! 'Igher up!"

The men laughed, and the laughter was carried

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down wind to the deserter, who, hearing that he had made a mistake, went off to worry his own regiment half a mile away. He was received with shots; the Aurangabadis were very angry with him for disgracing their colours.

"An' that's all right," said Ortheris, withdrawing his head as he heard the hiccough of the Sniders in the distance. "S'elp me Gawd, tho', that man's not fit to live—messin' with my beauty-sleep this way."

"Go out and shoot him in the morning, then," said the subaltern incautiously. "Silence in the tents now. Get your rest, men."

Ortheris lay down with a happy little sigh, and in two minutes there was no sound except the rain on the canvas and the all-embracing and elemental snoring of Learoyd.

The camp lay on a bare ridge of the Himalayas, and for a week had been waiting for a flying column to make connection. The nightly rounds of the deserter and his friends had become a nuisance.

In the morning the men dried themselves in hot sunshine and cleaned their grimy accoutrements. The native regiment was to take its turn of road-making that day while the Old Regiment loafed.

"I'm goin' to lay for a shot at that man," said Ortheris, when he had finished washing out his

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rifle. "'E comes up the watercourse every evenin' about five o'clock. If we go and lie out on the north 'ill a bit this afternoon we'll get 'im."

"You're a bloodthirsty little mosquito," said Mulvaney, blowing blue clouds into the air. "But I suppose I will have to come wid you. Fwhere's Jock?"

"Gone out with the Mixed Pickles, 'cause 'e thinks 'isself a bloomin' marksman," said Ortheris with scorn.

The "Mixed Pickles" were a detachment of picked shots, generally employed in clearing spurs of hills when the enemy were too impertinent. This taught the young officers how to handle men, and did not do the enemy much harm. Mulvaney and Ortheris strolled out of camp, and passed the Aurangabadis going to their road-making.

"You've got to sweat to-day," said Ortheris genially. "We're going to get your man. You didn't knock 'im out last night by any chance, any of you?"

"No. The pig went away mocking us. I had one shot at him," said a private. "He's my cousin, and *I* ought to have cleared our dishonour. But good luck to you."

They went cautiously to the north hill, Ortheris leading, because, as he explained, "this is a long-range show, an' I've got to do it." His was

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an almost passionate devotion to his rifle, which, by barrack-room report, he was supposed to kiss every night before turning in. Charges and scuffles he held in contempt, and, when they were inevitable, slipped between Mulvaney and Learoyd, bidding them to fight for his skin as well as their own. They never failed him. He trotted along, questing like a hound on a broken trail, through the wood of the north hill. At last he was satisfied, and threw himself down on the soft pine-needle slope that commanded a clear view of the watercourse and a brown, bare hillside beyond it. The trees made a scented darkness in which an army corps could have hidden from the sun-glare without.

"'Ere's the tail o' the wood," said Ortheris. "'E's got to come up the watercourse, 'cause it gives 'im cover. We'll lay 'ere. 'Tain't not 'arf so bloomin' dusty neither."

He buried his nose in a clump of scentless white violets. No one had come to tell the flowers that the season of their strength was long past, and they had bloomed merrily in the twilight of the pines.

"This is something like," he said luxuriously. "Wot a 'evinly clear drop for a bullet acrost! How much d'you make it, Mulvaney?"

"Seven hunder. Maybe a trifle less, bekaze the air's so thin."

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Wop! wop! wop! went a volley of musketry on the rear face of the north hill.

"Curse them Mixed Pickles firin' at nothin'! They'll scare arf the country."

"Thry a sightin' shot in the middle of the row," said Mulvaney, the man of many wiles. "There's a red rock yonder he'll be sure to pass. Quick!"

Ortheris ran his sight up to six hundred yards and fired. The bullet threw up a feather of dust by a clump of gentians at the base of the rock.

"Good enough!" said Ortheris, snapping the scale down. "You snick your sights to mine or a little lower. You're always firin' high. But remember, first shot to me. O Lordy! but it's a lovely afternoon."

The noise of the firing grew louder, and there was a tramping of men in the wood. The two lay very quiet, for they knew that the British soldier is desperately prone to fire at anything that moves or calls. Then Learoyd appeared, his tunic ripped across the breast by a bullet, looking ashamed of himself. He flung down on the pine-needles, breathing in snorts.

"One o' them damned gardeners o' th' Pickles," said he, fingering the rent. "Firin' to th' right flank, when he knowed I was there. If I knew who he was I'd 'a' rippen the hide offan him. Look at ma tunic!"

"That's the spishil trustability av a marksman.

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Thrain him to hit a fly wid a stiddy rest at seven hunder, an' he'll loose on anythin' he sees or hears up to th' mile. You're well out av that fancy-firin' gang, Jock. Stay here."

"Bin firin' at the bloomin' wind in the bloomin' tree-tops," said Ortheris with a chuckle. "I'll show you some firin' later on."

They wallowed in the pine-needles, and the sun warmed them where they lay. The Mixed Pickles ceased firing, and returned to camp, and left the wood to a few scared apes. The watercourse lifted up its voice in the silence, and talked foolishly to the rocks. Now and again the dull thump of a blasting-charge three miles away told that the Aurangabadis were in difficulties with their road-making. The men smiled as they listened and lay still, soaking in the warm leisure. Presently Learoyd, between the whiffs of his pipe —

"Seems queer — about 'im yonder — desertin' at all."

"'E'll be a bloomin' side queerer when I've done with 'im," said Ortheris. They were talking in whispers, for the stillness of the wood and the desire of slaughter lay heavy upon them.

"I make no doubt he had his reasons for desertin'; but, my faith! I make less doubt ivry man has good reason for killin' him," said Mulvaney.

"Happen there was a lass tewed up wi' it. Men do more than more for th' sake of a lass."

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"They make most av us 'list. They've no manner av right to make us desert."

"Ah; they make us 'list, or their fathers do," said Learoyd softly, his helmet over his eyes.

Ortheris's brows contracted savagely. He was watching the valley. "If it's a girl I'll shoot the beggar twice over, an' second time for bein' a fool. You're blasted sentimental all of a sudden. Thinkin' o' your last near shave?"

"Nay, lad; Ah was but thinkin' o' what had happened."

"An' fwhat has happened, ye lumberin' child av calamity, that you're lowing like a cow-calf at the back av the pasture, an' suggestin' invidious excuses for the man Stanley's goin' to kill. Ye'll have to wait another hour yet, little man. Spit it out, Jock, an' bellow melojus to the moon. It takes an earthquake or a bullet graze to fetch aught out av you. Discoorse, Don Juan! The a-moors av Lotharius Learoyd! Stanley, kape a rowlin' rig'mintal eye on the valley."

"It's along o' yon hill there," said Learoyd, watching the bare sub-Himalayan spur that reminded him of his Yorkshire moors. He was speaking more to himself than his fellows. "Ay," said he, "Rumbolds Moor stands up ower Skipton town, an' Greenhow Hill stands up ower Pately Brig. I reckon you've never heeard tell o' Greenhow Hill, but yon bit o' bare stuff, if there

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was nobbut a white road windin', is like it; strangely like. Moors an' moors an' moors, wi' never a tree for shelter, an' gray houses wi' flag-stone rooves, and pewits cryin', an' a windhover goin' to and fro just like these kites. And cold! A wind that cuts you like a knife. You could tell Greenhow Hill folk by the red-apple colour o' their cheeks an' nose-tips, and their blue eyes driven into pin-points by the wind. Miners mostly, burrowin' for lead i' th' hillsides, followin' the trail of th' ore-vein same as a field-rat. It was the roughest minin' I ever seen. Yo'd come on a bit o' creakin' wood windlass like a well-head, an' you was let down i' th' bight of a rope, fendin' your-sen off the side wi' one hand, carryin' a candle stuck in a lump o' clay with t'other, an' clickin' hold of a rope with t'other hand."

"An' that's three of them," said Mulvaney, "Must be a good climate in those parts."

Learoyd took no heed.

"An' then yo' came to a level, where you crept on your hands and knees through a mile o' windin' drift, an' you come out into a cave-place as big as Leeds Town-hall, with a' engine pumpin' water from workin's 'at went deeper still. It's a queer country, let alone minin', for the hill is full of those natural caves, an' the rivers an' the becks drops into what they call pot-holes, an' come out again miles away."

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"Wot was you doin' there?" said Ortheris.

"I was a young chap then, an' mostly went wi' 'osses, leadin' coal and lead ore; but at th' time I'm tellin' on I was drivin' the waggon-team i' th' big sumph. I didn't belong to that country-side by rights. I went there because of a little difference at home, an' at fust I took up wi' a rough lot. One night we'd been drinkin', an' I must ha' hed more than I could stand, or happen th' ale was none so good. Though i' them days, by for God, I never seed bad ale." He flung his arms over his head, and gripped a vast handful of white violets. "Nah," said he, "I never seed the ale I could not drink, the 'bacca I could not smoke, nor the lass I could not kiss. Well, we mun have a race home, the lot on us. I lost all th' others, an' when I was climbin' ower one of them walls built o' loose stones, I comes down into the ditch, stones and all, an' broke my arm. Not as I knawed much about it, for I fell on th' back av of my head, an' was knocked stupid like. An' when I come to mysen it were mornin', an' I were lyin' on the settle i' Jesse Roantree's house-place, an' 'Liza Roantree was settin' sewin'. I ached all ovver, and my mouth were like a lime-kiln. She gave me a drink out of a china mug wi' gold letters — 'A Present from Leeds' — as I looked at many and many a time at after. 'Yo're to lie still while Dr. Warbottom comes, because your arm's broken,

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and father has sent a lad to fetch him. He found yo' when he was goin' to work, an' carried you here on his back,' sez she. 'Oa!' sez I; an' I shet my eyes, for I felt ashamed o' mysen. 'Father's gone to his work these three hours, an' he said he'd tell 'em to get somebody to drive the tram.' The clock ticked, an' a bee comed in the house, an' they rung i' my head like mill-wheels. An' she give me another drink an' settled the pillow. 'Eh, but yo're young to be getten drunk an' such like, but yo' won't do it again, will yo'?'—'Noa,' sez I, 'I wouldn't if she'd not but stop they mill-wheels clatterin'.'"

"Faith, it's a good thing to be nursed by a woman when you're sick!" said Mulvaney. "Dir' cheap at the price av twenty broken heads."

Ortheris turned to frown across the valley. He had not been nursed by many women in his life.

"An' then Dr. Warbottom comes ridin' up, an' Jesse Roantree along with 'im. He was a high-larned doctor, but he talked wi' poor folks same as theirsens. 'What's ta bin agaate on naa?' he sings out. 'Brekkin' tha thick head?' An' he felt me all ovver. 'That's none broken. Tha' nobbut knocked a bit sillier than ordinary, an' that's daaft eneaf.' An' soa he went on, callin' me all the names he could think on, but settin' my arm, wi' Jesse's help, as careful as could be. 'Yo'

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mun let the big oaf bide here a bit, Jesse,' he says, when he hed strapped me up an' given me a dose o' physic; 'an' you an' Liza will tend him, though he's scarcelins worth the trouble. An' tha'll lose tha work,' sez he, 'an' tha'll be upon th' Sick Club for a couple o' months an' more. Doesn't tha think tha's a fool?'"

"But whin was a young man, high or low, the other av a fool, I'd like to know?" said Mulvaney. "Sure, folly's the only safe way to wisdom, for I've thried it."

"Wisdom!" grinned Ortheris, scanning his comrades with uplifted chin. "You're bloomin' Solomons, you two, ain't you?"

Learoyd went calmly on, with a steady eye like an ox chewing the cud.

"And that was how I come to know 'Liza Roantree. There's some tunes as she used to sing—aw, she were always singin'—that fetches Greenhow Hill before my eyes as fair as yon brow across there. And she would learn me to sing bass, an' I was to go to th' chapel wi' 'em, where Jesse and she led the singin', th' old man playin' the fiddle. He was a strange chap, old Jesse, fair mad wi' music, an' he made me promise to learn the big fiddle when my arm was better. It belonged to him, and it stood up in a big case alongside o' th' eight-day clock; but Willie Satterthwaite, as played it in the chapel, had getten deaf as a door-post, and

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it vexed Jesse, as he had to rap him ower his head wi' th' fiddle-stick to make him give ower sawin' at th' right time.

"But there was a black drop in it all, an' it was a man in a black coat that brought it. When th' Primitive Methodist preacher came to Greenhow, he would always stop wi' Jesse Roantree, an' he laid hold of me from th' beginning. It seemed I wor a soul to be saved, and he meaned to do it. At th' same time I jealoused 'at he were keen o' savin' 'Liza Roantree's soul as well, and I could ha' killed him many a time. An' this went on till one day I broke out, an' borrowed th' brass for a drink from 'Liza. After fower days I come back, wi' my tail between my legs, just to see 'Liza again. But Jesse were at home an' th' preacher — th' Reverend Amos Barraclough. 'Liza said naught, but a bit o' red come into her face as were white of a regular thing. Says Jesse, tryin' his best to be civil, 'Nay, lad, it's like this. You've getten to choose which way it's goin' to be. I'll ha' nobody across ma doorstep as goes a-drinkin', an' borrows my lass's money to spend i' their drink. Ho'd tha tongue, 'Liza,' sez he, when she wanted to put in a word 'at I were welcome to th' brass, and she were none afraid that I wouldn't pay it back. Then the Reverend cuts in, seein' as Jesse were losin' his temper, an' they fair beat me among them. But it were 'Liza, as looked an' said naught,

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as did more than either o' their tongues, an' soa I concluded to get converted."

"Fwhat?" shouted Mulvaney. Then, checking himself, he said softly, "Let be! Let be! Sure the Blessed Virgin is the mother of all religion an' most women; an' there's a dale av piety in a girl if the men would only let ut stay there. I'd ha' been converted myself under the circumstances."

"Nay, but," pursued Learoyd with a blush, "I meaned it."

Ortheris laughed as loudly as he dared, having regard to his business at the time.

"Ay, Ortheris, you may laugh, but you didn't know yon preacher Barraclough — a little white-faced chap, wi' a voice as 'u'd wile a bird off an a bush, and a way o' layin' hold of folks as made them think they'd never had a live man for a friend before. You never saw him, an'— an'— you never seed 'Liza Roantree — never seed 'Liza Roantree. . . . Happen it was as much 'Liza as th' preacher and her father, but anyways they all meaned it, an' I was fair 'shamed o' mysen, an' so I become what they call a changed character. And when I think on, it's hard to believe as yon chap going to prayer-meetin's, chapel, and class-meetin's were me. But I never had naught to say for mysen, though there was a deal o' shoutin', and old Sammy Strother, as were almost clemmed

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to death and doubled up with the rheumatics, would sing out, 'Joyful! Joyful!' and 'at it were better to go up to heaven in a coal-basket than down to hell i' a coach an' six. And he would put his poor old claw on my shoulder, sayin', 'Doesn't tha feel it, tha great lump? Doesn't tha feel it?' An' sometimes I thought I did, and then again I thought I didn't, an' how was that?"

"The iverlastin' nature av mankind," said Mulvaney. "An', furthermore, I misdoubt you were built for the Primitive Methodians. They're a new corps anyways. I hold by the Ould Church, for she's the mother of them all—ay, an' the father, too. I like her bekaze she's most remarkable regimintal in her fittings. I may die in Honolulu, Nova Zambra, or Cape Cayenne, but wherever I die, me bein' fwhat I am, an' a priest handy, I go under the same orders an' the same words an' the same unction as tho' the Pope himself come down from the roof av St. Peter's to see me off. There's neither high nor low, nor broad nor deep, nor betwixt nor between wid her, an' that's what I like. But mark you, she's no manner av Church for a wake man, bekaze she takes the body and the soul av him, onless he has his proper work to do. I remember when my father died that was three months comin' to his grave; begad he'd ha' sold the shebeen above our heads for ten minutes'

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quittance of purgathory. An' he did all he could. That's why I say ut takes a strong man to dale with the Ould Church, an' for that reason you'll find so many women go there. An' that same's a conundrum."

"Wot's the use o' worritin' 'bout these things?" said Ortheris. "You're bound to find all out quicker nor you want to, any'ow." He jerked the cartridge out of the breech-block into the palm of his hand. "'Ere's my chaplain," he said, and made the venomous black-headed bullet bow like a marionette. "'E's goin' to teach a man all about which is which, an' wot's true, after all, before sundown. But wot 'appened after that, Jock?"

"There was one thing they boggled at, and almost shut th' gate i' my face for, and that were my dog Blast, th' only one saved out o' a litter o' pups as was blowed up when a keg o' minin'-powder loosed off in th' store-keeper's hut. They liked his name no better than his business, which were fightin' every dog he comed across; a rare good dog, wi' spots o' black and pink on his face, one ear gone, and lame o' one side wi' being driven in a basket through an iron roof a matter of half a mile.

"They said I mun give him up 'cause he were worldly and low; and would I let mysen be shut out of heaven for the sake on a dog? 'Nay,' says

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I, 'if th' door isn't wide enough for th' pair on us, we'll stop outside, for we'll none be parted.' And th' preacher spoke up for Blast, as had a likin' for him from th' first — I reckon that was why I come to like th' preacher — and wouldn't hear o' changin' his name to Bless, as some o' them wanted. So th' pair on us became reg'lar chapel-members. But it's hard for a young chap o' my build to cut traces from the world, th' flesh, an' the devil all uv a heap. Yet I stuck to it for a long time, while th' lads as used to stand about th' town-end an' lean ower th' bridge, spittin' into th' beck o' a Sunday, would call after me, 'Sitha, Learoyd, when's ta bean to preach, 'cause we're comin' to hear tha.'—'Ho'd tha jaw. He hasn't getten th' white choaker on ta morn,' another lad would say, and I had to double my fists hard i' th' bottom of my Sunday coat, and say to mysen, 'If 'twere Monday and I warn't a member o' the Primitive Methodists, I'd leather all th' lot of yond'.' That was th' hardest of all — to know that I could fight and I mustn't fight."

Sympathetic grunts from Mulvaney.

"So what wi' singin', practisin', and class-meetin's, and th' big fiddle, as he made me take between my knees, I spent a deal o' time i' Jesse Roantree's house-place. But often as I was there, th' preacher fared to me to go oftener, and both th' old man an' th' young woman were pleased to

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have him. He lived i' Pately Brig, as were a goodish step off, but he come. He come all the same. I liked him as well or better as any man I'd ever seen i' one way, and yet I hated him wi' all my heart i' t'other, and we watched each other like cat and mouse, but civil as you please, for I was on my best behaviour, and he was that fair and open that I was bound to be fair with him. Rare good company he was if I hadn't wanted to wring his cliver little neck half of the time. Often and often when he was goin' from Jesse's I'd set him a bit on the road."

"See 'im 'ome, you mean?" said Ortheris.

"Ay. It's a way we have i' Yorkshire o' seein' friends off. Yon was a friend as I didn't want to come back, and he didn't want me to come back neither, and so we'd walk together towards Pately, and then he'd set me back again, and there we'd be wal two o'clock i' the mornin' settin' each other to an' fro like a blasted pair o' pendulums 'twixt hill and valley, long after th' light had gone out i' 'Liza's window, as both on us had been looking at, pretending to watch the moon."

"Ah!" broke in Mulvaney, "ye'd no chanst against the maraudin' psalm-singer. They'll take the airs an' the graces instid av the man nine times out av ten, an' they only find the blunder later—the wimmen."

"That's just where yo're wrong," said Learoyd,

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reddening under the freckled tan of his cheeks. "I was th' first wi' Liza, an' yo'd think that were enough. But th' parson were a steady-gaited sort o' chap, and Jesse were strong o' his side, and all th' women i' the congregation dinned it to 'Liza 'at she were fair fond to take up wi' a wastrel ne'er-do-weel like me, as was scarcelins respectable an' a fighting dog at his heels. It was all very well for her to be doing me good and saving my soul, but she must mind as she didn't do herself harm. They talk o' rich folk bein' stuck up an' genteel, but for cast-iron pride o' respectability there's naught like poor chapel folk. It's as cold as th' wind o' Greenhow Hill — ay, and colder, for 'twill never change. And now I come to think on it, one o'th' strangest things I know is 'at they couldn't abide th' thought o' soldiering. There's a vast o' fightin' i' th' Bible, and there's a deal of Methodists i' th' army; but to hear chapel folk talk yo'd think that soldierin' were next door, an' t'other side, to hangin'. I' their meetin's all their talk is o' fightin'. When Sammy Strother were stuck for summat to say in his prayers, he'd sing out, 'Th' sword o' th' Lord and o' Gideon.' They were allus at it about puttin' on th' whole armour o' righteousness, an' fightin' the good fight o' faith. And then, atop o' 't all, they held a prayer-meetin' ower a young chap as wanted to 'list and nearly deafened him, till he picked up his hat and fair

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ran away. And they'd tell tales in th' Sunday-school o' bad lads as had been thumped and brayed for bird-nesting o' Sundays and playin' truant o' week-days, and how they took to wrestlin', dog-fightin', rabbit-runnin', and drinkin', till at last, as if 'twere a hepitaph on a gravestone, they damned him across th' moors wi', 'an' then he went and 'listed for a soldier,' an' they'd all fetch a deep breath, and throw up their eyes like a hen drinkin'."

"Fwhy is ut?" said Mulvaney, bringing down his hand on his thigh with a crack. "In the name av God, fwhy is ut? I've seen ut, tu. They cheat an' they swindle an' they lie an' they slander, an' fifty things fifty times worse; but the last an' the worst by their reckonin' is to serve the Widdy honest. It's like the talk av childher —seein' things all round."

"Plucky lot of fightin' good fights of whatsername they'd do if we didn't see they had a quiet place to fight in. And such fightin' as theirs is! Cats on the tiles. T'other callin' to which to come on. I'd give a month's pay to get some o' them broad-backed beggars in London sweatin' through a day's road-makin' an' a night's rain. They'd carry on a deal afterwards — same as we're supposed to carry on. I've bin turned out of a measly 'arf-license pub down Lambeth way, full o' greasy kebmen, 'fore now," said Ortheris with an oath.

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"Maybe you were dhrunk," said Mulvaney soothingly.

"Worse nor that. The Forders were drunk. *I* was wearin' the Queen's uniform."

"I'd no particular thought to be a soldier i' them days," said Learoyd, still keeping his eye on the bare hill opposite, "but this sort o' talk put it i' my head. They was so good, th' chapel folk, that they tumbled ower t'other side. But I stuck to it for 'Liza's sake, specially as she was learning me to sing the bass part in a horotorio as Jesse were gettin' up. She sung like a throstle hersen, and we had practisin's night after night for a matter of three months."

"I know what a horotorio is," said Ortheris pertly. "It's a sort of chaplain's sing-song — words all out of the Bible, and hullabaloojah choruses."

"Most Greenhow Hill folks played some instrument or t'other, an' they all sung so you might have heard them miles away, and they were so pleased wi' the noise they made they didn't fair to want anybody to listen. The preacher sung high seconds when he wasn't playin' the flute, an' they set me, as hadn't got far with the big fiddle, again' Willie Satterthwaite, to jog his elbow when he had to get a' gate playin'. Old Jesse was happy if ever a man was, for he were th' conductor an' th' first fiddle an' th' leadin' singer, beatin' time

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wi' his fiddle-stick, till at times he'd rap with it on the table, and cry out, 'Now, you mun all stop; it's my turn.' And he'd face round to his front, fair sweating wi pride, to sing th' tenor solos. But he were grandest i' th' choruses, waggin' his head, flinging his arms round like a windmill, and singin' hisself black in the face. A rare singer were Jesse.

"Yo' see, I was not o' much account wi' 'em all exceptin' to 'Liza Roantree, and I had a deal o' time settin' quiet at meetings and horotorio practises to hearken their talk, and if it were strange to me at beginnin', it got stranger still at after, when I was shut on it, and could study what it meaned.

"Just after th' horotorios come off, 'Liza, as had allus been weakly like, was took very bad. I walked Dr. Warbottom's horse up and down a deal of times while he were inside, where they wouldn't let me go, though I fair ached to see her.

"'She'll be better i' noo, lad — better i' noo,' he used to say. 'Tha mun ha' patience.' Then they said if I was quiet I might go in, and th' Reverend Amos Barraclough used to read to her lyin' propped up among th' pillows. Then she began to mend a bit, and they let me carry her on to th' settle, and when it got warm again she went about same as afore. Th' preacher and me and Blast was a deal together i' them days, and

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i' one way we was rare good comrades. But I could ha' stretched him time and again with a good will. I mind one day he said he would like to go down into th' bowels o' th' earth, and see how th' Lord had builded th' framework o' th' everlastin' hills. He were one of them chaps as had a gift o' sayin' things. They rolled off the tip of his cliver tongue, same as Mulvaaney here, as would ha' made a rare good preacher if he had nobbut given his mind to it. I lent him a suit o' miner's kit as almost buried th' little man, and his white face down i' th' coat-collar and hat-flap looked like the face of a boggart, and he cowered down i' th' bottom o' the waggon. I was drivin' a tram as led up a bit of an incline up to th' cave where th' engine was pumpin', and where th' ore was brought up and put into th' waggons as went down o' themselves, me puttin' th' brake on and th' horses a-trottin' after. Long as it was daylight we were good friends, but when we got fair into th' dark, and could nobbut see th' day shinin' at the hole like a lamp at a street-end, I feeled downright wicked. Ma religion dropped all away from me when I looked back at him as were always comin' between me and 'Liza. The talk was 'at they were to be wed when she got better, an' I couldn't get her to say yes or nay to it. He began to sing a hymn in his thin voice, and I came out wi' a chorus that was all cussin' an' swearin' at my

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horses, an' I began to know how I hated him. He were such a little chap, too. I could drop him wi' one hand down Garstang's Copper-hole — a place where th' beck slithered ower th' edge on a rock, and fell wi' a bit of a whisper into a pit as no rope i' Greenhow could plump."

Again Learoyd rooted up the innocent violets. "Ay, he should see th' bowels o' th' earth an' never naught else. I could take him a mile or two along th' drift, and leave him wi' his candle doused to cry hallelujah, wi' none to hear him and say amen. I was to lead him down th' ladder-way to th' drift where Jesse Roantree was workin', and why shouldn't he slip on th' ladder, wi' my feet on his fingers till they loosed grip, and I put him down wi' my heel? If I went fust down th' ladder I could click hold on him and chuck him over my head, so as he should go squshin' down the shaft, breakin' his bones at ev'ry timberin' as Bill Appleton did when he was fresh, and hadn't a bone left when he wrought to th' bottom. Niver a blasted leg to walk from Pately. Niver an arm to put round 'Liza Roantree's waist. Niver no more — niver no more."

The thick lips curled back over the yellow teeth, and that flushed face was not pretty to look upon. Mulvaney nodded sympathy, and Ortheris, moved by his comrade's passion, brought up the rifle to his shoulder, and searched the hillside for his

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quarry, muttering ribaldry about a sparrow, a spout, and a thunder-storm. The voice of the watercourse supplied the necessary small talk till Learoyd picked up his story.

"But it's none so easy to kill a man like yon. When I'd given up my horses to th' lad as took my place and I was showin' th' preacher th' workin's, shoutin' into his ear across th' clang o' th' pumpin'-engines, I saw he were afraid o' naught; and when the lamplight showed his black eyes, I could feel as he was masterin' me again. I were no better nor Blast chained up short and growlin' i' the depths of him while a strange dog went safe past.

"'Th'art a coward and a fool,' I said to mysen; an' I wrestled i' my mind again' him till, when we come to Garstang's Copper-hole, I laid hold o' the preacher and lifted him up over my head and held him into the darkest on it. 'Now, lad,' I says, 'it's to be one or t'other on us — thee or me — for 'Liza Roantree. Why, isn't thee afraid for thysen?' I says, for he was still i' my arms as a sack. 'Nay; I'm but afraid for thee, my poor lad, as knows naught,' says he. I set him down on th' edge, an' th' beck run stiller, an' there was no more buzzin' in my head like when th' bee come through th' window o' Jesse's house. 'What dost tha mean?' says I.

"'I've often thought as thou ought to know,'

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says he, 'but 'twas hard to tell thee. 'Liza Roantree's for neither on us, nor for nobody o' this earth. Dr. Warbottom says — and he knows her, and her mother before her — that she is in a decline, and she cannot live six months longer. He's known it for many a day. Steady, John! Steady!' says he. And that weak little man pulled me further back and set me again' him, and talked it all over quiet and still, me turnin' a bunch o' candles in my hand, and counting them ower and ower again as I listened. A deal on it were th' regular preachin' talk, but there were a vast lot as made me begin to think as he were more of a man than I'd ever given him credit for, till I were cut as deep for him as I were for mysen.

"Six candles we had, and we crawled and climbed all that day while they lasted, and I said to mysen, ''Liza Roantree hasn't six months to live.' And when we came into th' daylight again we were like dead men to look at, an' Blast come behind us without so much as waggin' his tail. When I saw 'Liza again she looked at me a minute and says, 'Who's telled tha? For I see tha knows.' And she tried to smile as she kissed me, and I fair broke down.

"Yo' see, I was a young chap i' them days, and had seen naught o' life, let alone death, as is allus a-waitin'. She telled me as Dr. Warbottom said as Greenhow air was too keen, and they were

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goin' to Bradford, to Jesse's brother David, as worked i' a mill, and I mun hold up like a man and a Christian, and she'd pray for me. Well, and they went away, and the preacher that same back end o' th' year were appointed to another circuit, as they call it, and I were left alone on Greenhow Hill.

"I tried, and I tried hard, to stick to th' chapel, but 'tweren't th' same thing at after. I hadn't 'Liza's voice to follow i' th' singin', nor her eyes a-shinin' acrost their heads. And i' th' class meetings they said as I mun have some experiences to tell, and I hadn't a word to say for mysen.

"Blast and me moped a good deal, and happen we didn't behave ourselves ower well, for they dropped us and wondered however they'd come to take us up. I can't tell how we got through th' time, while i' th' winter I gave up my job and went to Bradford. Old Jesse were at th' door o' th' house, in a long street o' little houses. He'd been sendin' th' children 'way as were clatterin' their clogs in th' causeway, for she were asleep.

"'Is it thee?' he says; 'but you're not to see her. I'll none have her wakened for a nowt like thee. She's goin' fast, and she mun go in peace. Thou'lt never be good for naught i' th' world, and as long as thou live thou'lt never play the big fiddle. Get away, lad, get away!' So he shut the door softly i' my face.

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"Nobody never made Jesse my master, but it seemed to me he was about right, and I went away into the town and knocked up against a recruiting sergeant. The old tales o' th' chapel folk came buzzin' into my head. I was to get away, and this were th' regular road for the likes o' me. I 'listed there and then, took th' Widow's shillin', and had a bunch o' ribbons pinned i' my hat.

"But next day I found my way to David Roantree's door, and Jesse came to open it. Says he, 'Thou's come back again wi' th' devil's colours flyin'—thy true colours, as I always telled thee.'

"But I begged and prayed of him to let me see her nobbut to say good-bye, till a woman calls down th' stairway, 'She says John Learoyd's to come up.' Th' old man shifts aside in a flash, and lays his hand on my arm, quite gentle like. 'But thou'lt be quiet, John,' says he, 'for she's rare and weak. Thou was allus a good lad.'

"Her eyes were all alive wi' light, and her hair was thick on the pillow round her, but her cheeks were thin—thin to frighten a man that's strong. 'Nay, father, yo' mayn't say th' devil's colours. Them ribbons is pretty.' An' she held out her hands for th' hat, an' she put all straight as a woman will wi' ribbons. 'Nay, but what they're pretty,' she says. 'Eh, but I'd ha' liked to see thee i' thy red coat, John, for thou was allus my own lad—my very own lad, and none else.'

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"She lifted up her arms, and they come round my neck i' a gentle grip, and they slacked away, and she seemed fainting. 'Now yo' mun get away, lad,' says Jesse, and I picked up my hat and I came downstairs.

"Th' recruiting sergeant were waitin' for me at th' corner public-house. 'Yo've seen your sweetheart?' says he. 'Yes, I've seen her,' says I. 'Well, we'll have a quart now, and you'll do your best to forget her,' says he, bein' one o' them smart, bustlin' chaps. 'Ay, sergeant,' says I. 'Forget her.' And I've been forgettin' her ever since."

He threw away the wilted clump of white violets as he spoke. Ortheris suddenly rose to his knees, his rifle at his shoulder, and peered across the valley in the clear afternoon light. His chin cuddled the stock, and there was a twitching of the muscles of the right cheek as he sighted; Private Stanley Ortheris was engaged on his business. A speck of white crawled up the watercourse.

"See that beggar? . . . Got 'im."

Seven hundred yards away, and a full two hundred down the hillside, the deserter of the Aurangabadis pitched forward, rolled down a red rock, and lay very still, with his face in a clump of blue gentians, while a big raven flapped out of the pine wood to make investigation.

"That's a clean shot, little man," said Mulvaney.

Learoyd thoughtfully watched the smoke clear

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away. "Happen there was a lass tewed up wi' him, too," said he.

Ortheris did not reply. He was staring across the valley, with the smile of the artist who looks on the completed work.

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HIS PRIVATE HONOUR

THE autumn batch of recruits for the Old Regiment had just been uncarted. As usual they were said to be the worst draft that had ever come from the Depot. Mulvaney looked them over, grunted scornfully, and immediately reported himself very sick.

"Is it the regular autumn fever?" said the doctor, who knew something of Terence's ways. "Your temperature's normal."

"'Tis a hundred and thirty-seven rookies to the bad, Sorr. I'm not very sick now, but I will be dead if these boys are thrown at me in my rejuced condition. Doctor, dear, supposin' you was in charge of three cholera camps an'——"

"Go to hospital, then, you old contriver," said the doctor, laughing.

Terence bundled himself into a blue bedgown,—Dinah Shadd was away attending to a major's lady, who preferred Dinah without a diploma to anybody else with a hundred,—put a pipe in his teeth, and paraded the hospital balcony exhorting Ortheris to be a father to the new recruits.

"They're mostly your own sort, little man," he

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said with a grin; "the top-spit av Whitechapel. I'll interogue thim whin they're more like something they niver will be,—an' that's a good honist soldier like me."

Ortheris yapped indignantly. He knew as well as Terence what the coming work meant, and he thought Terence's conduct mean. Then he strolled off to look at the new cattle, who were staring at the unfamiliar landscape with large eyes, and asking if the kites were eagles and the pariah-dogs jackals.

"Well, you are a holy set of bean-faced beggars, *you* are," he said genially to a knot in the barrack square. Then running his eye over them,—"Fried fish an' whelks is about your sort. Blimy if they haven't sent some pink-eyed Jews too. You chap with the greasy 'ed, which o' the Solomons was your father, Moses?"

"My name's Anderson," said a voice sullenly.

"Oh, Samuelson! All right, Samuelson! An' how many o' the likes o' you Sheenies are comin' to spoil B Company?"

There is no scorn so complete as that of the old soldier for the new. It is right that this should be so. A recruit must learn first that he is not a man, but a thing which in time, and by the mercy of Heaven, may develop into a soldier of the Queen if it takes care and attends to good advice. Ortheris's tunic was open, his cap overlopped one

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eye, and his hands were behind his back as he walked round growing more contemptuous at each step. The recruits did not dare to answer, for they were new boys in a strange school, who had called themselves soldiers at the Depôt in comfortable England.

"Not a single pair o' shoulders in the whole lot. I've seen some bad drafts in my time,—some bloomin' bad drafts; but this 'ere draft beats any draft I've ever known. Jock, come an' look at these squidgy, ham-shanked beggars."

Learoyd was walking across the square. He arrived slowly, circled round the knot as a whale circles round a shoal of small fry, said nothing, and went away whistling.

"Yes, you may well look sheepy," Ortheris squeaked to the boys. "It's the likes of you breaks the 'earts of the likes of us. We've got to lick you into shape, and never a ha'penny extry do we get for so doin', and you ain't never grateful neither. Don't you go thinkin' it's the Colonel nor yet the company orf'cer that makes you. It's me, you Johnnie Raws—you Johnnie *bloomin'* Raws!"

A company officer had come up unperceived behind Ortheris at the end of this oration. "You may be right, Ortheris," he said quietly, "but I shouldn't shout it." The recruits grinned as Ortheris saluted and collapsed.

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Some days afterwards I was privileged to look over the new batch, and they were everything that Ortheris had said, and more. B Company had been devastated by forty or fifty of them; and B Company's drill on parade was a sight to shudder at. Ortheris asked them lovingly whether they had not been sent out by mistake, and whether they had not better post themselves back to their friends. Learoyd thrashed them methodically one by one, without haste but without slovenliness; and the older soldiers took the remnants from Learoyd and went over them in their own fashion. Mulvaney stayed in hospital, and grinned from the balcony when Ortheris called him a shirker and other worse names.

"By the grace av God we'll brew men av them yet," Terence said one day. "Be vartuous an' parsevere, me son. There's the makin's av colonels in that mob if we only go deep enough — wid a belt."

"We!" Ortheris replied, dancing with rage. "I just like you and your 'we's.' 'Ere's B Company drillin' like a drunk Militia reg'ment."

"So I've been officially acquent," was the answer from on high;" but I'm too sick this tide to make certain."

"An' you, you fat Hirishman, shiftin' and shirkin' up there among the arrerroot an' the sago."

"*An'* the port wine — you've forgot the port

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wine, Orth'ris; it's none so bad." Terence smacked his lips provokingly.

"And we're wore off our feet with these 'ere—kangaroos. Come out o' that, an' earn your pay. Come on down outer that, an' *do* somethin' 'stead o' grinnin' up there like a Jew monkey, you frowsy-'eaded Fenian."

"When I'm betther av my various complaints I'll have a little private talkin' wid you. In the meanwhile,—duck!"

Terence flung an empty medicine bottle at Ortheris's head and dropped into a long chair, and Ortheris came to tell me his opinion of Mulvaney three times over,—each time entirely varying all the words.

"There'll be a smash one o' these days," he concluded. "Well, it's none o' my fault, but it's 'ard on B Company."

It was very hard on B Company, for twenty seasoned men cannot push twice that number of fools into their places and keep their own places at the same time. The recruits should have been more evenly distributed through the regiment, but it seemed good to the Colonel to mass them in a company where there was a large proportion of old soldiers. He found his reward early one morning when the battalion was advancing by companies in echelon from the right. The order was given to form company squares, which are compact little

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bricks of men, very unpleasant for a line of charging cavalry to deal with. B Company was on the left flank, and had ample time to know what was going on. For that reason presumably it gathered itself into a thing like a decayed aloe-clump, the bayonets pointing anywhere in general and nowhere in particular, and in that clump, roundel, or mob it stayed till the dust had gone down and the Colonel could see and speak. He did both, and the speaking part was admitted by the regiment to be the finest thing that the "old man" had ever risen to since one delightful day at a sham-fight, when a cavalry division had occasion to walk over his line of skirmishers. He said, almost weeping, that he had given no order for rallying groups, and that he preferred to see a little dressing among the men occasionally. He then apologised for having mistaken B Company for men. He said that they were but weak little children, and that since he could not offer them each a perambulator and a nursemaid (this may sound comic to read, but B Company heard it by word of mouth and winced), perhaps the best thing for them to do would be to go back to squad drill. To that end he proposed sending them, out of their turn, to garrison duty in Fort Amara, five miles away,—D Company were next for this detestable duty, and nearly cheered the Colonel. There he devoutly hoped that their

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own subalterns would drill them to death, as they were of no use in this their present life.

It was an exceedingly painful scene, and I made haste to be near B Company barracks when parade was dismissed and the men were free to talk. There was no talking at first because each old soldier took a new draft and kicked him very severely. The non-commissioned officers had neither eyes nor ears for these accidents. They left the barracks to themselves, and Ortheris improved the occasion by a speech. I did not hear that speech, but fragments of it were quoted for weeks afterwards. It covered the birth, parentage, and education of every man in the company by name; it gave a complete account of Fort Amara from a sanitary and social point of view; and it wound up with an abstract of the whole duty of a soldier, each recruit his use in life, and Ortheris's views on the use and fate of the recruits of B Company.

"You can't drill, you can't walk, you can't shoot,—you,—you awful rookies! Wot's the good of you? You eats and you sleeps, and you eats, and you goes to the doctor for medicine when your innards is out o' order, for all the world as if you was bloomin' generals. An' now you've topped it all, you bats'-eyed beggars, with getting us druv out to that stinkin' Fort 'Ammerer. We'll fort you when we get out there;

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yes, an' we'll 'ammer you too. Don't you think you've come into the Harmy to drink Heno, an' clot your comp'ny, an' lie on your cots an' scratch your fat heads. You can do that at 'ome sellin' matches, which is all you're fit for, you keb-huntin', penny-toy, bootlace, baggage-tout, 'orse-'oldin', sandwich-backed se-wers, you.[1] I've spoke you as fair as I know 'ow, and you give good 'eed, 'cause if Mulvaney stops skrimshankin'—gets out o' 'orspital — when we're in the Fort, I lay your lives will be trouble to you."

That was Ortheris's peroration, and it caused B Company to be christened the Boot-black Brigade. With this disgrace on their slack shoulders they went to garrison duty at Fort Amara under three officers who were under instructions to twist their little tails. The army, unlike every other profession, cannot be taught through shilling books. First a man must suffer, then he must learn his work, and the self-respect that that knowledge brings. The learning is hard, in a land where Our army is not a red thing that walks down the street to be looked at, but a living, tramping reality liable to be needed at the shortest notice, when there is no time to say, "Hadn't you better?" and "Won't you, please?"

The company officers divided themselves into three. When Brander the captain was wearied,

[1] Ortheris meant *seers* — which means pigs.

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he gave over to Maydew, and when Maydew was hoarse he ordered the junior subaltern Ouless to bucket the men through squad and company drill, till Brander could go on again. Out of parade hours the old soldiers spoke to the recruits as old soldiers will, and between the four forces at work on them, the new draft began to stand on their feet and feel that they belonged to a good and honorable service. This was proved by their once or twice resenting Ortheris's technical lectures.

"Drop it now, lad," said Learoyd, coming to the rescue. "Th' pups are biting back. They're none so rotten as we looked for."

"Ho! Yes. You think yourself soldiers now, 'cause you don't fall over each other on p'rade, don't you? You think 'cause the dirt don't cake off you week's end to week's end that you're clean men. You think 'cause you can fire your rifle without more nor shuttin' both eyes, you're something to fight, don't you? You'll know later on," said Ortheris to the barrack-room generally. "Not but what you're a little better than you was," he added, with a gracious wave of his cutty.

It was in this transition stage that I came across the new draft once more. Their officers, in the zeal of youth forgetting that the old soldiers who stiffened the sections must suffer equally with the raw material under hammering, had made all a

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little stale and unhandy with continuous drill in the square, instead of marching the men into the open and suppling them with skirmishing-drill. The month of garrison duty in the Fort was nearly at an end, and B Company were quite fit for a self-respecting regiment to drill with. They had no style or spring — that would come in time — but as far as they went they were passable. I met Maydew one day and inquired after their health. He told me that young Ouless was putting a polish on a half-company of them in a great square by the east bastion of the Fort that afternoon. Because the day was Saturday I went off to taste the full beauty of leisure in watching another man hard at work.

The fat forty-pound muzzle-loaders on the east bastion made very comfortable resting-places. You could sprawl full length on the iron warmed by the afternoon sun to blood-heat, and command an easy view of the parade-ground which lay between the powder-magazine and the curtain of the bastion.

I saw a half-company called over and told off for drill, saw Ouless come from his quarters, tugging at his gloves, and heard the first *'Shun!* that locks the ranks and shows that work has begun. Then I went off on my own thoughts, the squeaking of the boots and the rattle of the rifles making a good accompaniment, and the line of red coats

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and black trousers a suitable background to them all. They concerned the formation of a territorial army for India,—an army of specially paid men enlisted for twelve years' service in her Majesty's Indian possessions, with the option of extending, on medical certificate, for another five and the certainty of a pension at the end. They would be such an army as the world had never seen,—one hundred thousand trained men drawing annually five, no, fifteen, thousand men from England, making India their home, and allowed to marry in reason. Yes, I thought, watching the line shift to and fro, break and re-form, we would buy back Cashmere from the drunken imbecile who was turning it into a hell, and there we would plant our much-married regiments,—the men who had served ten years of their time,—and there they should breed us white soldiers, and perhaps a second fighting-line of Eurasians. At all events, Cashmere was the only place in India that the Englishman could colonise, and if we had foothold there we could. . . . Oh, it was a beautiful dream! I left that territorial army, swelled to a quarter of a million men, far behind, swept on as far as an independent India, hiring war-ships from the mother country, guarding Aden on the one side and Singapore on the other, paying interest on her loans with beautiful regularity, but borrowing no men from beyond her own borders—a

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colonised, manufacturing India with a permanent surplus and her own flag. I had just installed myself as Viceroy, and by virtue of my office had shipped four million sturdy, thrifty natives to the Malayan Archipelago, where labour is always wanted and the Chinese pour in too quickly, when I became aware that things were not going smoothly with the half-company. There was a great deal too much shuffling and shifting and "as you were-ing." The non-commissioned officers were snapping at the men, and I fancied Ouless backed one of his orders with an oath. He was in no position to do this, because he was a junior who had not yet learned to pitch his word of command in the same key twice running. Sometimes he squeaked, and sometimes he grunted, and a clear, full voice with a ring in it has more to do with drill than people think. He was nervous both on parade and in mess, because he was unproven and knew it. One of his majors had said in his hearing, "Ouless has a skin or two to slough yet, and he hasn't the sense to be aware of it." That remark had stayed in Ouless's mind and caused him to think about himself in little things, which is not the best training for a young man. He tried to be cordial at mess, and became over-effusive. Then he tried to stand on his dignity, and appeared sulky and boorish. He was only hunting for the just medium and the proper note,

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and had found neither because he had never faced himself in a big thing. With his men he was as ill at ease as he was with his mess, and his voice betrayed him. I heard two orders and then:— "Sergeant, what *is* that rear-rank man doing, damn him?" That was sufficiently bad. A company officer ought not to ask sergeants for information. He commands; and commands are not held by syndicates.

It was too dusty to see the drill accurately, but I could hear the excited little voice pitching from octave to octave, and the uneasy ripple of badgered or bad-tempered files running down the ranks. Ouless had come on parade as sick of his duty as were the men of theirs. The hot sun had told on everybody's temper, but most of all on the youngest man's. He had evidently lost his self-control, and not possessing the nerve or the knowledge to break off till he had recovered it again, was making bad worse by ill-language.

The men shifted their ground and came close under the gun I was lying on. They were wheeling quarter-right and they did it very badly, in the natural hope of hearing Ouless swear again. He could have taught them nothing new, but they enjoyed the exhibition. Instead of swearing, Ouless lost his head completely, and struck out nervously at the wheeling flank-man with a little Malacca riding-cane that he held in his hand for a pointer.

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The cane was topped with thin silver over lacquer, and the silver had worn through in one place, leaving a triangular flap sticking up. I had just time to see that Ouless had thrown away his commission by striking a soldier, when I heard the rip of cloth and a piece of gray shirt showed under the torn scarlet on the man's shoulder. It had been the merest nervous flick of an exasperated boy, but quite enough to forfeit his commission, since it had been dealt in anger to a volunteer and no pressed man, who could not, under the rules of the service, reply. The effect of it, thanks to the natural depravity of things, was as though Ouless had cut the man's coat off his back. Knowing the new draft by reputation, I was fairly certain that every one of them would swear with many oaths that Ouless had actually thrashed the man. In that case Ouless would do well to pack his trunk. His career as a servant of the Queen in any capacity was ended. The wheel continued, and the men halted and dressed immediately opposite my resting-place, Ouless's face was perfectly bloodless. The flanking man was a dark red, and I could see his lips moving in wicked words. He was Ortheris! After seven years' service and three medals, he had been struck by a boy younger than himself! Further, he was my friend and a good man, a proved man, and an Englishman. The shame of the thing made me

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as hot as it made Ouless cold, and if Ortheris had slipped in a cartridge and cleared the account at once I should have rejoiced. The fact that Ortheris, of all men, had been struck, proved that the boy could not have known whom he was hitting; but he should have remembered that he was no longer a boy. And then I was sorry for him, and then I was angry again, and Ortheris stared in front of him and grew redder and redder.

The drill halted for a moment. No one knew why, for not three men could have seen the insult, the wheel being end-on to Ouless at the time. Then, led I conceived by the hand of Fate, Brander, the captain, crossed the drill-ground, and his eye was caught by not more than a square foot of gray shirt over a shoulder-blade that should have been covered by well-fitting tunic.

"Heavens and Earth!" he said, crossing in three strides. "Do you let your men come on parade in rags, sir? What's that scarecrow doing here? Fall out, that flank-man. What do you mean by —— You, Ortheris, of all men! What the deuce do you mean?"

"Beg y' pardon, sir," said Ortheris. "I scratched it against the guard-gate running up to parade."

"Scratched it! Ripped it up, you mean. It's half off your back."

"It was a little tear at first, sir, but in portin'

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arms it got stretched, sir, an'—an' I can't look behind me. I felt it givin', sir."

"Hm!" said Brander. "I should think you did feel it give. I thought it was one of the new draft. You've a good pair of shoulders. Go on!"

He turned to go. Ouless stepped after him, very white, and said something in a low voice.

"Hey, what? What! Ortheris," the voice dropped.

I saw Ortheris salute, say something, and stand at attention.

"Dismiss," said Brander curtly. The men were dismissed. "I can't make this out. You say——?" he nodded at Ouless, who said something again. Ortheris stood still, the torn flap of his tunic falling nearly to his waist-belt. He had, as Brander said, a good pair of shoulders, and prided himself on the fit of his tunic.

"Beg y' pardon, sir," I heard him say, "but I think Lieutenant Ouless has been in the sun too long. He don't quite remember things, sir. I come on p'rade with a bit of a rip, and it spread, sir, through portin' arms, as I have said, sir."

Brander looked from one face to the other, and I suppose drew his own conclusions, for he told Ortheris to go with the other men who were flocking back to barracks. Then he spoke to Ouless and went away, leaving the boy in the middle of the parade-ground fumbling with his sword-knot.

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He looked up, saw me lying on the gun, and came to me biting the back of his gloved forefinger, so completely thrown off his balance that he had not sense enough to keep his trouble to himself.

"I say, you saw that, I suppose?" He jerked his head back to the square, where the dust left by the departing men was settling down in white circles.

"I did," I answered, for I was not feeling polite.

"What the devil ought I to do?" He bit his finger again. "I told Brander what I had done. I hit him."

"I'm perfectly aware of that," I said, "and I don't suppose Ortheris has forgotten it already."

"Ye—es; but I'm dashed if I know what I ought to do. Exchange into another company, I suppose. I can't ask the man to exchange, I suppose. Hey?"

The suggestion showed the glimmerings of proper sense, but he should not have come to me or any one else for help. It was his own affair, and I told him so. He seemed unconvinced, and began to talk of the possibilities of being cashiered. At this point the spirit moved me, on behalf of the unavenged Ortheris, to paint him a beautiful picture of his insignificance in the scheme of creation. He had a papa and a mamma seven thousand miles away, and perhaps

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some friends. They would feel his disgrace, but no one else would care a penny. He would be only Lieutenant Ouless of the Old Regiment dismissed the Queen's service for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. The Commander-in-Chief, who would confirm the orders of the court-martial, would not know who he was; his mess would not speak of him; he would return to Bombay, if he had money enough to go home, more alone than when he had come out. Finally, — I rounded the sketch with precision,— he was only one tiny dab of red in the vast gray field of the Indian Empire. He must work this crisis out alone, and no one could help him, and no one cared — (this was untrue, because I cared immensely; he had spoken the truth to Brander on the spot) — whether he pulled through it or did not pull through it. At last his face set and his figure stiffened.

"Thanks, that's quite enough. I don't want to hear any more," he said in a dry, grating voice, and went to his own quarters.

Brander spoke to me afterwards and asked me some absurd questions as to whether I had seen Ouless cut the coat off Ortheris's back. I knew that jagged sliver of silver would do its work well, but I contrived to impress on Brander the completeness, the wonderful completeness of my disassociation from that drill. I began to tell him

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all about my dreams for the new territorial army in India, and he left me.

I could not see Ortheris for some days, but learned that when he returned to his fellows, he had told the story of the blow in vivid language. Samuelson, the Jew, then asserted that it was not good enough to live in a regiment where you were drilled off your feet and knocked about like a dog. The remark was a perfectly innocent one, and exactly tallied with Ortheris's expressed opinions. Yet Ortheris had called Samuelson an unmentionable Jew, had accused him of kicking women on the head in London, and howling under the cat, had hustled him, as a bantam hustles a barn-door cock, from one end of the barrack-room to the other, and finally had heaved every single article in Samuelson's valise and bedding-roll into the verandah and the outer dirt, kicking Samuelson every time that the bewildered creature stooped to pick anything up. My informant could not account for this inconsistency, but it seemed to me that Ortheris was working off his temper.

Mulvaney had heard the story in hospital. First his face clouded, then he spat, and then he laughed. I suggested that he had better return to active duty, but he saw it in another light, and told me that Ortheris was quite capable of looking after himself and his own affairs. "An' if I did come out,"

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said Terence, "like as not I would be catchin' young Ouless by the scruff av his trousies an' makin' an example av him before the men. Whin Dinah came back I would be under coort-martial, an' all for the sake av a little bit av a bhoy that'll make an' orf'cer yet. What's he goin' to do, Sorr, do ye know?"

"Which?" said I.

"Ouless, av coorse. I've no fear for the *man*. Begad, tho', if ut had come to me — but ut cud not have so come — I'd ha' made him cut his wisdom-teeth on his own sword-hilt."

"I don't think he knows himself what he means to do," I said.

"I should not wonder," said Terence. "There's a dale av thinkin' before a young man whin he's done wrong an' knows ut, an' is studyin' how to put ut right. Give the word from me to our little man there, that if he had ha' told on his shuparior orf'cer I'd ha' come out to Fort Amara to kick him into the Fort Ditch — an' that's a forty-fut drop."

Ortheris was not in good condition to talk to. He wandered up and down with Learoyd, brooding, so far as I could see, over his lost honour, and using, as I could hear, incendiary language. Learoyd would nod and spit and smoke and nod again, and he must have been a great comfort to Ortheris — almost as great a comfort as Samuel-

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son, whom Ortheris bullied disgracefully. If the Jew opened his mouth in the most casual remark, Ortheris would plunge down it with all arms and accoutrements, while the barrack-room stared and wondered.

Ouless had retired into himself to meditate. I saw him now and again, and he avoided me because I had witnessed his shame and spoken my mind on it. He seemed dull and moody, and found his half-company anything but pleasant to drill. The men did their work and gave him very little trouble, but just when they should have been feeling their feet, and showing that they felt them by spring and swing and snap, the elasticity died out, and it was only drilling with war-game blocks. There is a beautiful little ripple in a well-made line of men, exactly like the play of a perfectly tempered sword. Ouless's half-company moved as a broomstick moves,and would have broken as easily.

I was speculating whether Ouless had sent money to Ortheris, which would have been bad, or had apologised to him in private, which would have been worse, or had decided to let the whole affair slide, which would have been worst of all, when orders came to me to leave the station for a while. I had not spoken directly to Ortheris, for his honour was not my honour, and he was its only guardian, and he would not say anything except bad words.

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I went away, and, from time to time, thought a great deal of that subaltern and that private in Fort Amara, and wondered what would be the upshot of everything.

When I returned it was early spring. B Company had been shifted from the Fort to regular duty in cantonments, the roses were getting ready to bud on the Mall, and the regiment, which had been at a camp of exercise among other things, was going through its spring musketry-course under an adjutant who had a notion that its shooting-average was low. He had stirred up the company-officers and they had bought extra ammunition for their men — the Government allowance is just sufficient to foul the rifling — and E Company, which counted many marksmen, was vapouring and offering to challenge all the other companies, and the third-class shots were very sorry that they had ever been born, and all the subalterns were a rich, ripe saddle-colour from sitting at the butts six or eight hours a day.

I went off to the butts after breakfast, very full of curiosity to see how the new draft had come forward. Ouless was there with his men by the bald hillock that marks the six hundred yards range, and the men were in gray-green *khaki*, that shows the best points of a soldier and shades off into every background he may stand against. Before I was in hearing-distance I could see, as they

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sprawled on the dusty grass, or stood up and shook themselves, that they were men made over again — wearing their helmets with the cock of self-possession, swinging easily, and jumping to the word of command. Coming nearer, I heard Ouless whistling "Ballyhooley" between his teeth as he looked down the range with his binoculars, and the back of Lieutenant Ouless was the back of a free man and an officer. He nodded as I came up, and I heard him fling an order to a non-commissioned officer in a sure and certain voice. The flag ran up from the target, and Ortheris flung himself down on his stomach to put in his ten shots. He winked at me over the breech-block as he settled himself, with the air of a man who has to go through tricks for the benefit of children.

"Watch, you men," said Ouless to the squad behind. "He's half your weight, Brannigan, but he isn't afraid of his rifle."

Ortheris had his little affectations and pet ways as the rest of us have. He weighed his rifle, gave it a little kick-up, cuddled down again, and fired across the ground that was beginning to dance in the sun-heat.

"Miss!" said a man behind.

"Too much bloomin' background in front," Ortheris muttered.

"I should allow two feet for refraction," said Ouless.

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Ortheris fired again, made his outer, crept in, found the bull and stayed there; the non-commissioned officer pricking off the shots.

"Can't make out 'ow I missed that first," he said, rising, and stepping back to my side, as Learoyd took his place.

"Is it company practice?" I asked.

"No. Only just knockin' about. Ouless, 'e's givin' ten rupees for second-class shots. I'm outer it, of course, but I come on to show 'em the proper style o' doin' things. Jock looks like a sea-lion at the Brighton Aquarium sprawlin' an' crawlin' down there, don't 'e? Gawd, what a butt this end of 'im would make!"

"B Company has come up very well," I said.

"They 'ad to. They're none so dusty now, are they? Samuelson even, 'e can shoot sometimes. We're gettin' on as well as can be expected, thank you."

"How do you get on with——?"

"Oh, *'im!* Furst-rate! There's nothin' wrong with 'im."

"Was it all settled then?"

"'Asn't Terence told you? I should say it was. 'E's a gentleman, 'e is."

"Let's hear," I said.

Ortheris twinkled all over, tucked his rifle across his knees, and repeated, "'E's a gentleman. 'E's an officer too. You saw all that mess in

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Fort 'Ammerer. 'Twasn't none o' *my* fault, as you can guess. Only some goat in the drill judged it was behaviour or something to play the fool on p'rade. That's why we drilled so bad. When 'e 'it me, I was so took aback I couldn't do nothing, an' when I wished for to knock 'im down the wheel 'ad gone on, an' I was facin' you there lyin' on the guns. After the captain had come up an' was raggin' me about my tunic bein' tore, I saw the young beggar's eye, an' 'fore I could 'elp myself I begun to lie like a good 'un. You 'eard that? It was quite instinkive, but, my! I was in a lather. Then *he* said to the captain, 'I struck 'im!' sez 'e, an' I 'eard Brander whistle, an' then I come out with a new set o' lies all about portin' arms an' 'ow the rip growed, such as you 'eard. I done that too before I knew where I was. Then I give Samuelson what-for in barricks when he was dismissed. You should ha' seen 'is kit by the time I'd finished with it. It was all over the bloomin' Fort! Then me an' Jock went off to Mulvaney in 'orspital, five-mile walk, an' I was hoppin' mad. Ouless, 'e knowed it was court-marshal for me if I 'it 'im back—'e *must* ha' knowed. Well, I sez to Terence, whisperin' under the 'orspital balcony—'Terence,' sez I, 'what in 'ell am I to do?' I told 'im all about the row same as you saw. Terence 'e whistles like a bloomin' old

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bullfinch up there in 'orspital, an' 'e sez, 'You ain't to blame,' sez 'e. ''Strewth,' sez I, 'd'you suppose I've come 'ere five mile in the sun to take blame?' I sez. 'I want that young beggar's hide took off. I ain't a bloomin' conscript,' I sez. 'I'm a private servin' of the Queen, an' as good a man as 'e is,' I sez, 'for all 'is commission an' 'is airs an' 'is money,' sez I."

"What a fool you were," I interrupted. Ortheris, being neither a menial nor an American, but a free man, had no excuse for yelping.

"That's exactly what Terence said. I wonder you see it the same way so pat if 'e 'asn't been talkin' to you. 'E sez to me—'You ought to have more sense,' 'e sez, 'at your time of life. What differ do it make to you,' 'e sez, 'whether 'e 'as a commission or no commission? That's none o' your affair. It's between man an' man,' 'e sez, 'if 'e 'eld a general's commission. Moreover,' 'e sez, 'you don't look 'andsome 'oppin' about on your 'ind legs like that. Take him away, Jock.' Then 'e went inside, an' that's all I got outer Terence. Jock, 'e sez as slow as a march in slow time,—'Stanley,' 'e sez, 'that young beggar didn't *go* for to 'it you.' 'I don't give a damn whether 'e did or 'e didn't. 'It me 'e did,' I sez. 'Then you've only got to report to Brander,' sez Jock. 'What d'yer take me for?' I sez, as I was so mad I nearly 'it Jock. An' 'e got me by the neck an'

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shoved my 'ead into a bucket o' water in the cook-'ouse, an' then we went back to the Fort, an' I give Samuelson a little more trouble with 'is kit. 'E sez to me, 'I haven't been strook without hittin' back.' 'Well, you're goin' to be now,' I sez, an' I give 'im one or two for 'isself, an' arxed 'im very polite to 'it back, but he didn't. I'd ha' killed 'im if 'e 'ad. That done me a lot o' good.

"Ouless 'e didn't make no show for some days,—not till after you was gone; an' I was feelin' sick an' miserable, an' didn't know what I wanted, 'cept to black his little eyes good. I 'oped 'e might send me some money for my tunic. Then I'd ha' 'ad it out with him on p'rade and took my chance. Terence was in 'orspital still, you see, an' 'e wouldn't give me no advice.

"The day after you left, Ouless come across me carrying a bucket on fatigue, an' 'e sez to me very quiet, 'Ortheris, you've got to come out shootin' with me,' 'e sez. I felt like to bunging the bucket in 'is eye, but I didn't. I got ready to go instead. Oh, 'e's a gentleman! We went out together, neither sayin' nuthin' to the other till we was well out into the jungle beyond the river with 'igh grass all round,—pretty near that place where I went off my 'ead with you. Then 'e puts his gun down and sez very quietly: 'Ortheris, I struck you on p'rade,' 'e sez. 'Yes, sir,' sez I, 'you did.' 'I've been studying it out by myself,' 'e sez. 'Oh, you

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'ave, 'ave you?' sez I to myself, 'an' a nice time you've been about it, you bun-faced little beggar.' 'Yes, sir?' sez I. 'What made you screen me?' 'e sez. 'I don't know,' I sez, an' no more I did, nor do. 'I can't ask you to exchange,' 'e sez. 'An' I don't want to exchange myself,' sez 'e. 'What's comin' now?' I thinks to myself. 'Yes, sir,' sez I. He looked round at the 'igh grass all about, an' 'e sez to himself more than to me,—'I've got to go through it alone, by myself!' 'E looked so queer for a minute that, s'elp me, I thought the little beggar was going to pray. Then he turned round again an' 'e sez, 'What do you think yourself?' 'e sez. 'I don't quite see what you mean, sir,' I sez. 'What would you like?' 'e sez. An' I thought for a minute 'e was goin' to give me money, but 'e run 'is 'and up to the top button of 'is shootin'-coat an' loosed it. 'Thank you, sir,' I sez. 'I'd like that very well,' I sez, an' both our coats was off an' put down."

"Hooray!" I shouted incautiously.

"Don't make a noise on the butts," said Ouless from the shooting-place. "It puts the men off."

I apologised, and Ortheris went on.

"Our coats was off, an' 'e sez, 'Are you ready?' sez 'e. 'Come on then.' I come on, a bit uncertain at first, but he took me one under the chin that warmed me up. I wanted to mark the little beggar an' I hit high, but he went an' jabbed me

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over the heart like a good one. He wasn't so strong as me, but 'e knew more, an' in about two minutes I calls 'Time.' 'E steps back,—we was in-fightin' then: 'Come on when you're ready,' 'e sez; and when I had my wind I come on again, an' I got 'im one on the nose that painted 'is little aristocratic white shirt for 'im. That fetched 'im, an' I knew it quicker nor light. He come all round me, close-fightin', goin' steady for my heart. I held on all I could an' split 'is ear, but then I began to hiccup, an' the game was up. I come in to feel if I could throw 'im, an' 'e got me one on the mouth that downed me an'—look 'ere!"

Ortheris raised the left corner of his upper lip. An eye-tooth was wanting.

"'E stood over me an' e sez, 'Have you 'ad enough?' 'e sez. 'Thank you, I 'ave,' sez I. He took my 'and an' pulled me up, an' I was pretty shook. 'Now,' 'e sez, 'I'll apologise for 'ittin' you. It was all my fault,' 'e sez, 'an' it wasn't meant for you.' 'I knowed that, sir,' I sez, 'an' there's no need for no apology.' 'Then it's a accident,' 'e sez; 'an' you must let me pay for the coat. Else it'll be stopped out o' your pay.' I wouldn't ha' took the money before, but I did then. 'E give me ten rupees,—enough to pay for a coat twice over, an' we went down to the river to wash our faces, which was well marked. *His* was special. Then he sez to 'imself, sputterin'

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the water out of 'is mouth, 'I wonder if I done right,' 'e sez. 'Yes, sir,' sez I. 'There's no fear about that.' 'It's all well for you,' 'e sez, 'but what about the comp'ny?' 'Beggin' your pardon, sir,' I sez, 'I don't think the comp'ny will give no trouble.' Then we went shootin', an' when we come back I was feelin' as chirpy as a cricket, an' I took an' rolled Samuelson up an' down the verandah, and give out to the comp'ny that the difficulty between me and Lieutenant Ouless was satisfactory put a stop to. I told Jock, o' course, an' Terence. Jock didn't say nothing, but Terence 'e sez: 'You're a pair, you two. An', begad, I don't know which was the better man.' There ain't nothin' wrong with Ouless. 'E's a gentleman all over, an' 'e's come on as much as B Comp'ny. I lay 'e'd lose 'is commission, tho', if it come out that 'e'd been fightin' with a private. Ho! Ho! Fightin' all an afternoon with a bloomin' private like me! What do you think?" he added, brushing the breech of his rifle.

"I think what the umpires said at the sham fight: both sides deserve great credit. But I wish you'd tell me what made you save him in the first place."

"I was pretty sure that 'e 'adn't meant it for me, though that wouldn't ha' made no difference if 'e'd been copped for it. An' 'e was that young too, it wouldn't ha' been fair. Besides, if I had

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ha' done that I'd ha' missed the fight, and I'd ha' felt bad all my time. Don't you see it that way, sir?"

"It was your right to get him cashiered if you chose," I insisted.

"My right!" Ortheris answered with deep scorn. "My right! I ain't a recruity to go whinin' about my rights to this an' my rights to that, as if I couldn't look after myself. My rights! 'Strewth A'mighty! I'm a man."

The last squad were finishing their shots in a storm of low-voiced chaff. Ouless withdrew to a little distance in order to leave the men at ease, and I saw his face in the full sunlight for a moment, before he hitched up his sword, got his men together, and marched them back to barracks. It was all right. The boy was proven.

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MY LORD THE ELEPHANT

'Less you want your toes trod off you'd better get back at once,
For the bullocks are walkin' two by two,
The *byles* are walkin' two by two,
The bullocks are walkin' two by two,
An' the elephants bring the guns!
Ho! Yuss!
Great — big — long — black — forty-pounder guns:
Jiggery-jolty to and fro,
Each as big as a launch in tow —
Blind — dumb — broad-breeched — beggars o' batterin' guns.
Barrack Room Ballad.

TOUCHING the truth of this tale there need be no doubt at all, for it was told to me by Mulvaney at the back of the elephant-lines, one warm evening when we were taking the dogs out for exercise. The twelve Government elephants rocked at their pickets outside the big mud-walled stables (one arch, as wide as a bridge-arch, to each ·st-less beast), and the *mahouts* were preparing the evening meal. Now and again some impatient youngster would smell the cooking flour-cakes and squeal; and the naked little children of the elephant-lines would strut down the row shouting

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and commanding silence, or, reaching up, would slap at the eager trunks. Then the elephants feigned to be deeply interested in pouring dust upon their heads, but, so soon as the children passed, the rocking, fidgeting, and muttering broke out again.

The sunset was dying, and the elephants heaved and swayed dead black against the one sheet of rose-red low down in the dusty gray sky. It was at the beginning of the hot weather, just after the troops had changed into their white clothes, so Mulvaney and Ortheris looked like ghosts walking through the dusk. Learoyd had gone off to another barrack to buy sulphur-ointment for his last dog under suspicion of mange, and with delicacy had put his kennel into quarantine at the back of the furnace where they cremate the anthrax cases.

"*You* wouldn't like mange, little woman?" said Ortheris, turning my terrier over on her fat white back with his foot. "You're no end bloomin' partic'lar, you are. 'Oo wouldn't take no notice o' me t'other day 'cause she was goin' 'ome all alone in 'er dorg-cart, eh? Settin' on the box-seat like a bloomin' little tart, you was, Vicy. Now you run along an' make them 'uttees 'oller. Sick 'em, Vicy, loo!"

Elephants loathe little dogs. Vixen barked herself down the pickets, and in a minute all the ele-

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phants were kicking and squealing and clucking together.

"Oh, you soldier-men," said a mahout angrily, "call off your she-dog. She is frightening our elephant-folk."

"Rummy beggars!" said Ortheris meditatively. "Call 'em people, same as if they was. An' they are too. Not so bloomin' rummy when you come to think of it, neither."

Vixen returned yapping to show that she could do it again if she liked, and established herself between Ortheris's knees, smiling a large smile at his lawful dogs who dared not fly at her.

"'Seed the battery this mornin'?" said Ortheris. He meant the newly-arrived elephant-battery; otherwise he would have said simply "guns." Three elephants harnessed tandem go to each gun, and those who have not seen the big forty-pounders of position trundling along in the wake of their gigantic team have yet something to behold. The lead-elephant had behaved very badly on parade; had been cut loose, sent back to the lines in disgrace, and was at that hour squealing and lashing out with his trunk at the end of the line: a picture of blind, bound, bad temper. His mahout, standing clear of the flail-like blows, was trying to soothe him.

"That's the beggar that cut up on p'rade. 'E's *must*," said Ortheris, pointing. "There'll be mur-

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der in the lines soon, and then, per'aps, 'e'll get loose an' we'll 'ave to be turned out to shoot 'im, same as when one o' they native king's elephants musted last June. 'Ope 'e will."

"*Must* be sugared!" said Mulvaney, contemptuously, from his resting-place on a pile of dried bedding. "He's no more than in a powerful bad timper wid bein' put upon. I'd lay my kit he's new to the gun-team, an' by natur' he hates haulin'. Ask the mahout, Sorr."

I hailed the old white-bearded mahout, who was lavishing pet words on his sulky red-eyed charge.

"He is not *musth*," the man replied indignantly; "only his honour has been touched. Is an elephant an ox or a mule that he should tug at a trace? His strength is in his head—Peace, peace, my Lord! It was not *my* fault that they yoked thee this morning!—Only a low-caste elephant will pull a gun, and *be* is a Kumeria of the Doon. It cost a year and the life of a man to break him to burden. They of the Artillery put him in the gun-team because one of their base-born brutes had gone lame. No wonder that he was, and is, wroth."

"Rummy! Most unusual rum," said Ortheris. "Gawd, 'e is in a temper, though! S'pose 'e got loose!"

Mulvaney began to speak, but checked himself, and I asked the mahout what would happen if the heel-chains broke.

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"God knows, who made elephants," he said simply. "In his now state peradventure he might kill you three, or run at large till his rage abated. He would not kill me, except he were *musth*. *Then* would he kill me before any one in the world, because he loves me. Such is the custom of the elephant-folk; and the custom of us mahout-people matches it for foolishness. We trust each our own elephant, till our own elephant kills us. Other castes trust women, but we the elephant-folk. I have seen men deal with enraged elephants and live; but never was man yet born of woman that met my lord the elephant in his *musth* and lived to tell of the taming. They are enough bold who meet him angry."

I translated. Then said Terence: "Ask the heathen if he iver saw a man tame an elephint,—anyways,—a white man."

"Once," said the mahout, "I saw a man astride of such a beast in the town of Cawnpore; a bare-headed man, a white man, beating it upon the head with a gun. It was said he was possessed of devils or drunk."

"Is ut like, think you, he'd be doin' it sober?" said Mulvaney after interpretation, and the chained elephant roared.

"There's only one man top of earth that would be the partic'lar kind o' sorter bloomin' fool to do it!" said Ortheris. "When was that, Mulvaney?"

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"As the naygur sez, in Cawnpore; an' I was that fool — in the days av my youth. But it came about as naturil as wan thing leads to another,— me an' the elephint, and the elephint and me; an' the fight betune us was the most naturil av all."

"That's just wot it would ha' been," said Ortheris. "Only you must ha' been more than usual full. You done one queer trick with an elephant that I know of: why didn't you never tell us the other one?"

"Bekaze, onless you had heard the naygur here say what he has said spontaneous, you'd ha' called me for a liar, Stanley, my son, an' it would ha' been my juty an' my delight to give you the father an' mother av a beltin'! There's only wan fault about you, little man, an' that's thinking you know all there is in the world, an' a little more. 'Tis a fault that has made away wid a few orf'cers I've served undher, not to spake av ivry man but two that I iver thried to make into a privit."

"Ho!" said Ortheris with ruffled plumes, "an' 'oo was your two bloomin' little Sir Garnets, eh?"

"Wan was mesilf," said Mulvaney with a grin that darkness could not hide; 'an' — seein' that he's not here there's no harm speakin' av him — t'other was Jock."

"Jock's no more than a 'ayrick in trousies. 'E be'aves *like* one; an' 'e can't *'it* one at a 'un-

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dred; 'e was born *on* one, an' s'welp me 'e'll die *under* one for not bein' able to say wot 'e wants in a Christian lingo," said Ortheris, jumping up from the piled fodder only to be swept off his legs. Vixen leaped upon his stomach, and the other dogs followed and sat down there.

"I know what Jock is like," I said. "I want to hear about the elephant, though."

"It's another o' Mulvaney's bloomin' panoramas," said Ortheris, gasping under the dogs. "'Im an' Jock for the 'ole bloomin' British Army! You'll be sayin' you won Waterloo next, — you an' Jock. Garn!"

Neither of us thought it worth while to notice Ortheris. The big gun-elephant threshed and muttered in his chains, giving tongue now and again in crashing trumpet-peals, and to this accompaniment Terence went on: "In the beginnin'," said he, "me bein' what I was, there was a misunderstandin' wid my sergeant that was then. He put his spite on me for various reasons"—

The deep-set eyes twinkled above the glow of the pipe-bowl, and Ortheris grunted, "Another petticoat!"

— "For various an' promiscuous reasons; an' the upshot av ut was that he come into barricks wan afternoon whin I was settlin' my cowlick before goin' walkin', called me a big baboon (which I was not), an' a demoralisin' beggar

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(which I was), an' bid me go on fatigue thin an' there, helpin' shift E. P. tents, fourteen av thim, from the rest-camp. At that, me bein' set on my walk—"

"Ah!" from under the dogs, "'e's a Mormon, Vic. Don't you 'ave nothin' to do with 'im, little dorg."

—"Set on my walk, I tould him a few things that came up in my mind, an' wan thing led on to another, an' betune talkin' I made time for to hit the nose av him so that he'd be no Venus to any woman for a week to come. 'Twas a fine big nose, and well ut paid for a little groomin'. Afther that I was so well pleased wid my handicraftfulness that I niver raised fist on the gyard that came to take me to Clink. A child might ha' led me along, for I knew ould Kearney's nose was ruined. That summer the Ould Rig'ment did not use their own Clink, bekaze the cholera was hangin' about there like mildew on wet boots, an' 'twas murdher to confine in ut. We borrowed the Clink that belonged to the Holy Christians (the reg'mint that has never seen service yet), and that lay a mather av a mile away, acrost two p'rade-grounds an' the main road, an' all the ladies av Cawnpore goin' out for their afthernoon dhrive. So I moved in the best av society, my shadow dancin' along forninst me, an' the gyard as solemn as putty, the bracelets on my wrists, an' my heart full contint wid the

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notion of Kearney's pro — pro — probosculum in a shling.

"In the middle av ut all I perceived a gunner-orf'cer in full reg'mintals perusin' down the road, hell for leather, wid his mouth open. He fetched wan woild despairin' look on the dog-kyarts an' the polite society av Cawnpore, an' thin he dived like a rabbit into a dhrain by the side av the road.

"'Bhoys,' sez I, 'that orf'cer's dhrunk. 'Tis scand'lus. Let's take him to Clink too.'

"The corp'ril of the gyard made a jump for me, unlocked my stringers, an' he sez: 'If it comes to runnin', run for your life. If it doesn't, I'll trust your honour. Anyways,' sez he, 'come to Clink when you can.'

"Then I behild him runnin' wan way, stuffin' the bracelets in his pocket, they bein' Gov'ment property, and the gyard runnin' another, an' all the dog-kyarts runnin' all ways to wanst, an' me alone lookin' down the red bag av a mouth av an elephint forty-two feet high at the shoulder, tin feet wide, wid tusks as long as the Ochterlony Monumint. That was my first reconnaissance. Maybe he was not quite so contagious, nor quite so tall, but I didn't stop to throw out pickuts. Mother av Hiven, how I ran down the road! The baste began to investigate the dhrain wid the gunner-orf'cer in ut; an' that was the makin' av me. I tripped over wan of the rifles that my gyard had

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discarded (onsoldierly blackguards they was!), an' whin I got up I was facin' t'other way about, an' the elephint was huntin' for the gunner-orf'cer. I can see his big fat back yet. Excipt that he didn't dig, he car'ied on for all the world like little Vixen here at a rat-hole. He put his head down (by my sowl, he nearly stood on ut!) to shquint down the dhrain; thin he'd grunt, and run round to the other ind in case the orf'cer was gone out by the back door; an' he'd shtuff his trunk down the flue an' get ut filled wid mud, an' blow ut out, an' grunt an' swear! My troth, he swore all Hiven down upon that orf'cer; an' what a commissariat elephint had to do wid a gunner-orf'cer passed me. Me havin' nowhere to go except to Clink, I stud in the road wid the rifle, a Snider an' no amm'nition, philosophisin' upon the rear ind av the animal. All round me, miles and miles, there was howlin' desolation, for ivry human sowl wid two legs, or four for the matther av that, was ambuscadin', an' this ould rapparee stud on his head tuggin' an' gruntin' above the dhrain, his tail shtickin' up to the sky, an' he thryin' to thrumpet through three feet av road-sweepin's up his thrunk. Begad, 'twas wickud to behold!

"Subsequint, he caught sight av me shtandin' alone in the wide, wide world lanin' on the rifle. That dishcomposed him, bekaze he thought I was the gunner-orf'cer got out unbeknownst. He

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looked betune his feet at the dhrain, an' he looked at me, an' I sez to myself: 'Terence, me son, you've been watchin' this Noah's ark too long. Run for the life!' Dear knows I wanted to tell him I was only a poor privit on my way to Clink, an' no orf'cer at all, at all; but he put his ears forward av his thick head, an' I rethreated down the road grippin' the rifle, my back as cowld as a tombstone, an' the slack av my trousies, where I made sure he'd take hould, crawlin' wid — wid invidjus apprehension.

"I might ha' run till I dhropped, bekaze I was betune the two straight lines av the road, an' a man, or a thousand men for the matther av that, are the like av sheep in keepin' betune right an' left marks."

"Same as canaries," said Ortheris from the darkness. "Draw a line on a bloomin' little board, put their bloomin' little beakses there, stay so for hever an' hever, amen, they will. 'Seed a 'ole reg'ment, I 'ave, walk crabways along the edge of a two-foot water-cut 'stid o' thinkin' to cross it. Men *is* sheep — bloomin' sheep. Go on."

"But I saw his shadow wid the tail av my eye," continued the man of experiences, "an' 'Wheel,' I sez, 'Terence, wheel!' an' I wheeled. 'Tis truth that I cud hear the shparks flyin' from my heels; an' I shpun into the nearest compound, fetched wan jump from the gate to the verandah

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av the house, an' fell over a tribe of naygurs wid a half-caste boy at a desk, all manufacturin' harniss. 'Twas Antonio's Carriage Emporium at Cawnpore. Ye know ut, Sorr?

"Ould Grambags must ha' wheeled abreast wid me, for his thrunk came lickin' into the verandah like a belt in a barrick-room row, before I was in the shop. The naygurs an' the half-caste boy howled an' wint out at the back door, an' I stud lone as Lot's wife among the harniss. A powerful thirsty thing is harniss, by reason av the smell to ut.

"I wint into the back room, nobody bein' there to invite, an' I found a bottle av whisky and a goglet av wather. The first an' the second dhrink I niver noticed, bein' dhry, but the fourth an' the fifth tuk good hould av me, an' I begun to think scornful av elephints. 'Take the upper ground in manœ'vrin', Terence,' I sez; 'an' you'll be a gen'ral yet,' sez I. An' wid that I wint up to the flat mud roof av the house an' looked over the edge av the parapit, threadin' delicate. Ould Barrel-belly was in the compound, walkin' to an' fro, pluckin' a piece av grass here an' a weed there, for all the world like our colonel that is now whin his wife's given him a talkin' down an' he's prom'nadin' to ease his timper. His back was to me, an' by the same token I hiccupped. He checked in his walk, wan ear forward like a deaf ould lady wid an ear-thrumpet, an' his thrunk

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hild out in a kind av fore-reaching hook. Thin he wagged his ear, sayin', 'Do my sinses deceive me?' as plain as print, an' he recomminst promenadin'. Ye know Antonio's compound? 'Twas as full thin as 'tis now av new kyarts and ould kyarts, and second-hand kyarts an' kyarts for hire, — landos, an' b'rooshes, an' brooms, and wag'nettes av ivry description. Thin I hiccupped again, an' he began to study the ground beneath him, his tail whistlin' wid emotion. Thin he lapped his thrunk round the shaft av a wag'nette an' dhrew ut out circumspectuous an' thoughtful. 'He's not there,' he sez, fumblin' in the cushions wid his thrunk. Thin I hiccupped again, an' wid that he lost his patience good an' all, same as this wan in the lines here."

The gun-elephant was breaking into peal after peal of indignant trumpetings, to the disgust of the other animals, who had finished their food and wished to drowse. Between the outcries we could hear him picking restlessly at his ankle-ring.

"As I was sayin'," Mulvaney went on, "he behaved dishgraceful. He let out wid his fore-fut like a steam-hammer, bein' convinced that I was in ambuscade adjacint; an' that wag'nette ran back among the other carriages like a field-gun in charge. Thin he hauled ut out again an' shuk ut, an' by nature it came all to little pieces. Afther that he went sheer damn, slam, dancin',

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lunatic, double-shuffle demented wid the whole of Antonio's shtock for the season. He kicked, an' he straddled, and he stamped, an' he pounded all at wanst; his big bald head bobbin' up an' down solemn as a rigadoon. He tuk a new shiny broom an' kicked ut on wan corner, an' ut opened out like a blossomin' lily; an' he shtuck wan fool-foot through the flure av ut an' a wheel was shpinnin' on his tusk. At that he got scared, an', by this an' that, he fair sat down plump among the carriages, an' they pricked 'im wid splinters till he was a boundin' pincushin. In the middle av the mess, whin the kyarts was climbin' wan on top av the other, an' rickochettin' off the mud walls, an' showin' their agility, wid him tearin' their wheels off, I heard the sound av distrestful wailin' on the housetops, an' the whole Antonio firm an' fam'ly was cursin' me an' him from the roof next door; me bekaze I'd taken refuge wid them, and he bekaze he was playin' shtep-dances wid the carriages av the aristocracy.

"'Divart his attention,' sez Antonio, dancin' on the roof in his big white waistcoat. 'Divart his attention,' he sez, 'or I'll prosecute you.' An' the whole fam'ly shouts, 'Hit him a kick, mister soldier.'

"'He's divartin' himself,' I sez, for it was just the worth av a man's life to go down into the compound. But by way av makin' show I threw the

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whisky-bottle ('twas not full whin I came there) at him. He shpun round from what was left av the last kyart, an' shtuck his head into the verandah not three feet below me. Maybe 'twas the temptin'ness av his back or the whisky. Anyways, the next thing I knew was me, wid my hands full av mud an' mortar, all fours on his back, an' the Snider just slidin' off the slope av his head. I grabbed that an' scuffled on his neck, dhruv my knees undher his big flappin' ears, an' we wint to glory out av that compound wid a shqueal that crawled up my back an' down my belly. Thin I remimbered the Snider, and I grup ut by the muzzle an' hit him on the head. 'Twas most forlorn, like — like tappin' the deck av a throop-ship wid a cane to stop the engines whin you're sea-sick. But I parsevered till I sweated, an' at last from takin' no notice at all he began to grunt. I hit wid the full strength that was in me in those days, an' it might ha' discommoded him. We came back to the p'rade-groun' forty mile an hour, thrumpetin' vainglorious. I niver stopped hammerin' him for a minut; 'twas by way av divartin' him from runnin' undher the trees an' scrapin' me off like a poultice. The p'rade-groun' an' the road was all empty, but the throops was on the roofs av the barricks, an' betune Ould Thrajectory's gruntin' an' mine (for I was winded wid my stone-breakin'), I heard them clappin' an' cheerin'. He was

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growing more confused an' tuk to runnin' in circles.

"'Begad,' sez I to mysilf, 'there's dacincy in all things, Terence. 'Tis like you've shplit his head, and whin you come out av Clink you'll be put undher stoppages for killin' a Gov'mint elephint.' At that I caressed him."

"'Ow the devil did you do that? Might as well pat a barrick," said Ortheris.

"Thried all manner av endearin' epitaphs, but bein' more than a little shuk up I disremimbered what the divil would answer to. So, 'Good dog,' I sez; 'Pretty puss,' sez I; 'Whoa, mare,' I sez; an' at that I fetched him a shtroke av the butt for to conciliate him, and he shtood shtill among the barricks.

"'Will no one take me off the top av this murdherin' volcano?' I sez at the top av my shout, an' I heard a man yellin', 'Hould on, faith an' patience, the other elephints are comin'.' 'Mother av Glory,' I sez, 'will I rough-ride the whole shtud? Come an' take me down, ye cowards!'

"Thin a brace av fat she-elephints wid mahouts an' a commissariat sargint came shuffling round the corner av the barricks; an' the mahouts was abusin' Ould Potiphar's mother an' blood-kin.

"'Obsarve my reinforcemints,' I sez. 'They're goin' to take you to Clink, my son;' an' the child av calamity put his ears forward an' swung head-on

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to those females. The pluck av him, afther my oratorio on his brain-pan, wint to the heart av me. 'I'm in dishgrace mesilf,' I sez, 'but I'll do what I can for ye. Will ye go to Clink like a man, or fight like a fool whin there's no chanst?' Wid that I fetched him wan last lick on the head, an' he fetched a tremenjus groan an' dhropped his thrunk. 'Think,' sez I to him, an' 'Halt!' I sez to the mahouts. They was anxious so to do. I could feel the ould reprobit meditating undher me. At last he put his thrunk straight out an' gave a most melancholius toot (the like av a sigh wid an elephint); an' by that I knew the white flag was up an' the rest was no more than considherin' his feelin's.

"'He's done,' I sez. 'Kape open ordher left an' right alongside. We'll go to Clink quiet.'

"Sez the commissariat sergeant to me from his elephint, 'Are you a man or a mericle?' sez he.

"'I'm betwixt an' betune,' I sez, thryin' to set up stiff-back. 'An' what,' sez I, 'may ha' set this animal off in this opprobrious shtyle?' I sez, the gun-butt light an' easy on my hip an' my left hand dhropped, such as throopers behave. We was bowlin' on to the elephint-lines under escort all this time.

"'I was not in the lines whin the throuble began,' sez the sergeant. 'They tuk him off car'yin' tents an' such like, an' put him to the gun-team.

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I knew he would not like ut, but by token ut fair tore his heart out.'

"'Faith, wan man's mate is another's poison,' I sez. 'Twas bein' put on to carry tents that was the ruin av me.' An' my heart warrumed to Ould Double Ends bekaze he had been put upon.

"'We'll close on him here,' sez the sergeant, whin we got to the elephint-lines. All the mahouts an' their childher was round the pickets cursin' my pony from a mile to hear. 'You shkip off on to my elephint's back,' he sez. 'There'll be throuble.'

"'Sind that howlin' crowd away,' I sez, 'or he'll thrample the life out av thim.' I cud feel his ears beginnin' to twitch. 'An' do you an' your immoril she-elephints go well clear away. I will get down here. He's an Irishman,' I sez, 'for all his long Jew's nose, an' he shall be threated like an Irishman.'

"'Are ye tired av life?' sez the sergeant.

"'Divil a bit,' I sez; 'but wan av us has to win, an' I'm av opinion 'tis me. Get back,' I sez.

"The two elephints wint off, an' Smith O'Brine came to a halt dead above his own pickuts. 'Down,' sez I, whackin' him on the head, an' down he wint, shouldher over shouldher like a hill-side slippin' afther rain. 'Now,' sez I, slidin' down his nose an' runnin' to the front av him, 'you will see the man that's betther than you.'

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"His big head was down betune his big fore-feet, an' they was twisted in sideways like a kitten's. He looked the picture av innocince an' forlornsomeness, an' by this an' that his big hairy undherlip was thremblin', and he winked his eyes together to kape from cryin'. 'For the love av God,' I sez, clane forgettin' he was a dumb baste; 'don't take ut to heart so! Aisy, be aisy,' I says; an' with that I rubbed his cheek an' betune his eyes an' the top av his thrunk, talkin' all the time. 'Now,' sez I, 'I'll make you comfortable for the night. Send wan or two childher here,' I sez to the sergeant, who was watchin' for to see me killed. 'He'll rouse at the sight av a man.'"

"You got bloomin' clever all of a sudden," said Ortheris. "'Ow did you come to know 'is funny little ways that soon?"

"Bekaze," said Terence with emphasis, "bekaze I had conquered the beggar, my son."

"Ho!" said Ortheris between doubt and derision. "G'on."

"His mahout's child an' wan or two other line-babies came runnin' up, not bein' afraid av anything, an' some got wather an' I washed the top av his poor sore head (begad, I had done him to a turn!), an' some picked the pieces av carts out av his hide, an' we scraped him, an' handled him all over, an' we put a thunderin' big poultice av neem-leaves (the same that ye stick on a pony's

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gall) on his head, an' it looked like a smokin'-cap, an' we put a pile av young sugar-cane forninst him, an' he began to pick at ut. 'Now,' sez I, settin' down on his fore-foot, 'we'll have a dhrink, an' let bygones be.' I sent a naygur-child for a quart av arrack, an' the sergeant's wife she sint me out four fingers av whisky, an' whin the liquor came I cud see by the twinkle in Ould Typhoon's eye that he was no more a stranger to ut than me,—worse luck, than me! So he tuk his quart like a Christian, an' *thin* I put his shackles on, chained him fore an' aft to the pickuts, an' gave him my blessin', an' wint back to barricks."

"And after?" I said in the pause.

"Ye can guess," said Mulvaney. "There was confusion, an' the colonel gave me ten rupees, an' the adj'tant gave me five, an' my comp'ny captain gave me five, an' the men carried me round the barricks shoutin'."

"Did you go to Clink?" said Ortheris.

"I niver heard a word more about the misundherstandin' wid Kearney's beak, if that's what you mane; but sev'ril av the bhoys was tuk off sudden to the Holy Christians' Hotel that night. Small blame to thim,—they had twenty rupees in dhrinks. I wint to lie down an' sleep ut off, for I was as done an' double done as him there in the lines. 'Tis no small thing to go ride elephints.

"Subsequint, me an' the Venerable Father av

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Sin became mighty friendly. I wud go down to the lines, whin I was in dishgrace, an' spend an afthernoon collogin' wid him; he chewin' wan stick av sugar-cane an' me another, as thick as thieves. He'd take all I had out av my pockets an' put ut back again, an' now an' thin I'd bring him beer for his dijistin', an' I'd give him advice about bein' well behaved an' keepin' off the books. Afther that he wint the way av the Army, an' that's bein' thransferred as soon as you've made a good friend."

"So you never saw him again?" I demanded.

"Do you believe the first half av the affair?" said Terence.

"I'll wait till Learoyd comes," I said evasively. Except when he was carefully tutored by the other two and the immediate money-benefit explained, the Yorkshireman did not tell lies; and Terence, I knew, had a profligate imagination.

"There's another part still," said Mulvaney. "Ortheris was in that."

"Then I'll believe it all," I answered, not from any special belief in Ortheris's word, but from desire to learn the rest. He stole a pup from me once when our acquaintance was new, and with the little beast stifling under his overcoat, denied not only the theft, but that he ever was interested in dogs.

"That was at the beginnin' av the Afghan busi-

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ness," said Mulvaney; "years afther the men that had seen me do the thrick was dead or gone home. I came not to shpeak av ut at the last bekaze,—bekaze I do *not* care to knock the face av ivry man that calls me a liar. At the very beginnin' av the marchin' I wint sick like a fool. I had a boot-gall, but I was all for keepin' up wid the rig'mint and such like foolishness. So I finished up wid a hole in my heel that you cud ha' dhruv a tent-peg into. Faith, how often have I preached that to recruities since, for a warnin' to thim to look afther their feet! Our docthor, who knew our business as well as his own, he sez to me, in the middle av the Tangi Pass ut was: 'That's sheer damned carelessness,' sez he. 'How often have I tould you that a marchin' man is no stronger than his feet,—his feet,—his feet!' he sez. 'Now to hospital you go,' he sez, 'for three weeks, an expense to your Quane an' a nuisince to your counthry. Next time,' sez he, 'perhaps you'll put some av the whisky you pour down your throat, an' some av the tallow you put into your hair, into your socks,' sez he. Faith he was a just man! So soon as we come to the head av the Tangi I wint to hospital, hoppin' on wan fut, woild wid disappointment. 'Twas a field-hospital (all flies an' native apothecaries an' linimint) dhropped, in a way av shpeakin', close by the head av the Tangi. The hospital-gyard was ravin' mad wid us sick for keepin' thim

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there, an' we was ravin' mad at bein' kept; an' through the Tangi, day an' night an' night an' day, the fut an' horse an' guns an' commissariat an' tents an' followers av the brigades was pourin' like a coffee-mill. The doolies came dancin' through, scores an' scores av thim, an' they'd turn up the hill to hospital wid their sick, an' I lay in bed nursin' my heel, and hearin' the men bein' tuk out. I remimber wan night (the time I was tuk wid fever) a man came rowlin' through the tents, an', 'Is there any room to die here?' he sez; 'there's none wid the columns'; an' at that he dhropped dead acrost a cot, an' thin the man in ut began to complain against dyin' all alone in the dust undher dead men. Thin I must ha' turned mad wid the fever, an' for a week I was prayin' the saints to stop the noise av the columns movin' through the Tangi. Gun-wheels ut was that wore my head thin. Ye know how 'tis wid fever?"

We nodded; there was no need to explain.

"Gun-wheels an' feet an' people shoutin', but mostly gun-wheels. 'Twas neither night nor day to me for a week. In the mornin' they'd rowl up the tent-flies, and we sick cud look at the Pass an' considher what was comin' next. Horse, fut, or guns, they'd be sure to dhrop wan or two sick wid us, an' we'd get news. Wan mornin' whin the fever hild off av me, I was watchin' the Tangi, an' 'twas just like the picture on the backside av

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the Afghan medal,—men an' elephints an' guns comin' wan at a time crawlin' out of a dhrain."

"It *were* a dhrain," said Ortheris with feeling. "I've fell out an' been sick in the Tangi twice; an' wot turns my innards ain't no bloomin' violets neither."

"The Pass give a twist at the end, so everything shot out suddint, an' they'd built a throop-bridge (mud an' dead mules) over a nullah at the head av ut. I lay an' counted the elephints (gun-elephints) thryin' the bridge wid their thrunks an' rowlin' out sagacious. The fifth elephint's head came round the corner, an' he threw up his thrunk, an' he fetched a toot, an' there he shtuck at the head of the Tangi like a cork in a bottle. 'Faith,' thinks I to mesilf, 'he will not thrust the bridge; there will be throuble.'"

"Trouble! My Gawd!" said Ortheris. "Terence, *I* was be'ind that bloomin' 'uttee up to my stock in dust. Trouble!"

"Tell on then, little man; I only saw the hospital end av ut." Mulvaney knocked the ashes out of his pipe, as Ortheris heaved the dogs aside and went on.

"We was escort to them guns, three comp'nies of us," he said. "Dewcy was our major, an' our orders was to roll up anything we come across in the Tangi an' shove it out t'other end. Sort o' pop-gun picnic, see? We'd rolled up a lot o'

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lazy beggars o' native followers, an' some commissariat supplies that was bivoo-whackin' for ever seemin'ly, an' all the sweepin's of 'arf a dozen things what ought to 'ave bin at the front weeks ago, an' Dewcy he sez to us: 'You're most 'eart-breakin' sweeps,' 'e sez. 'For 'eving's sake,' sez 'e, 'do a little sweepin' now.' So we swep',—s'welp me, 'ow we did sweep 'em along! There was a full reg'ment be'ind us; most anxious to get on they was; an' they kep' on sendin' to us with the colonel's compliments, and what in 'ell was we stoppin' the way for, please? Oh, they was partic'lar polite! So was Dewcy! 'E sent 'em back wot-for, an' 'e give us wot-for, an' we give the guns wot-for, an' they give the commissariat wot-for, an' the commissariat give first-class extry wot-for to the native followers, an' on we'd go again till we was stuck, an' the 'ole Pass 'ud be swimmin' Allelujah for a mile an' a 'arf. We 'adn't no tempers, nor no seats to our trousies, an' our coats an' our rifles was chucked in the carts, so as we might ha' been cut up any minute, an' we was doin' drover-work. That was wot it was; drovin' on the Islin'ton road!

"I was close up at the 'ead of the column when we saw the end of the Tangi openin' out ahead of us, an' I sez; 'The door's open, boys. 'Oo'll git to the gall'ry fust?' I sez. Then I saw Dewcy screwin' 'is bloomin' eyeglass in 'is eye

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an' lookin' straight on. 'Propped,—*ther* beggar!' he sez; an' the be'ind end o' that bloomin' old 'uttee was shinin' through the dusk like a bloomin' old moon made o' tarpaulin. Then we 'alted, all chock-a-block, one atop o' the other, an' right at the back o' the guns there sails in a lot o' silly grinnin' camels, what the commissariat was in charge of—sailin' away as if they was at the Zoological Gardens an' squeezin' our men most awful. The dust was that up you couldn't see your 'and; an' the more we 'it 'em on the 'ead the more their drivers sez, 'Accha! Accha!' an' by Gawd it was 'at yer' before you knew where you was! An' that 'uttee's be'ind end stuck in the Pass good an' tight, an' no one knew wot for.

"Fust thing we 'ad to do was to fight they bloomin' camels. I wasn't goin' to be eat by no bull-*oont;* so I 'eld up my trousies with one 'and, standin' on a rock, an' 'it away with my belt at every nose I saw bobbin' above me. Then the camels fell back, an' they 'ad to fight to keep the rear-guard an' the native followers from crushin' into them; an' the rear-guard 'ad to send down the Tangi to warn the other reg'ment that we was blocked. I 'eard the mahouts shoutin' in front that the 'uttee wouldn't cross the bridge; an' I saw Dewcy skippin' about through the dust like a musquito worm in a tank. Then our comp'nies got tired o' waitin' an' begun to mark time, an'

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some goat struck up 'Tommy, make room for your Uncle.' After *that*, you couldn't neither see nor breathe nor 'ear; and there we was, singin' bloomin' serenades to the end of a' elephant that don't care for tunes! I sung too; I couldn't do nothin' else. They was strengthenin' the bridge in front, all for the sake of the 'uttee. By an' by, a' orf'cer caught me by the throat an' choked the sing out of me. So I caught the next man I could see by the throat an' choked the sing out of *'im*."

"What's the difference between being choked by an officer and being hit?" I asked, remembering a little affair in which Ortheris's honour had been injured by his lieutenant.

"One's a bloomin' lark, an' one's a bloomin' insult!" said Ortheris. "Besides, we was on service, an' no one cares what an orf'cer does then, s'long as 'e gets our rations an' don't get us unusual cut up. After that we got quiet, an' I 'eard Dewcy say that 'e'd court-martial the lot of us soon as we was out of the Tangi. Then we give three cheers for Dewcy an' three more for the Tangi; an' the 'uttee's be'ind end was stickin' in the Pass, so we cheered *that*. Then they said the bridge had been strengthened, an' we give three cheers for the bridge; but the 'uttee wouldn't move a bloomin' hinch. Not 'im! Then we cheered 'im again, an' Kite Dawson, that was corner-man at all the sing-songs ('e died on the way down), began to

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give a nigger lecture on the be'ind ends of elephants, an' Dewcy 'e tried to keep 'is face for a minute, but, Lord, you couldn't do such when Kite was playin' the fool an' askin' whether 'e mightn't 'ave leave to rent a villa an' raise 'is orphan children in the Tangi, 'cos 'e couldn't get 'ome no more. Then up come a' orf'cer (mounted like a fool, too) from the reg'ment at the back with some more of his colonel's pretty little compliments, an' what was this delay, please? We sung 'im 'There's another bloomin' row downstairs' till 'is 'orse bolted, an' then we give 'im three cheers; an' Kite Dawson sez 'e was goin' to write to 'The Times' about the awful state o' the streets in Afghanistan. The 'uttee's be'ind end was stickin' in the Pass all the time. At last one o' the mahouts came to Dewcy an' sez something.

"'Oh, Lord!' sez Dewcy, '*I* don't know the beggar's visiting-list! I'll give 'im another ten minutes an' then I'll shoot 'im.' Things was gettin' pretty dusty in the Tangi, so we all listened. ''E wants to see a friend,' sez Dewcy out loud to the men, an' 'e mopped 'is forehead and sat down on a gun-tail.

"I leave it to you to judge 'ow the reg'ment shouted. 'That's all right,' we sez. 'Three cheers for Mister Winterbottom's friend,' sez we. 'Why didn't you say so at fust? Pass the word for old Swizzletail's wife,'—and such like. Some o' the

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men they didn't laugh. They took it same as if it might have been a' introduction like, 'cos they knew about 'uttees. Then we all run forward over the guns an' in an' out among the elephants' legs,—Lord, I wonder 'arf the comp'nies wasn't squashed —an' the next thing I saw was Terence 'ere, lookin' like a sheet o' wet paper, comin' down the 'ill-side with a sergeant. 'Strewth,' I sez. 'I might ha' knowed 'e'd be at the bottom of any cat's trick,' sez I. Now you tell wot 'appened your end."

"I lay be the same as you did, little man, listenin' to the noises an' the bhoys singin'. Prisintly I heard whishperin' an' the doctor sayin', 'Get out av this, wakin' my sick wid your jokes about elephints.' An' another man sez, all angry: 'Tis a joke that is stoppin' two thousand men in the Tangi. That son av sin av a haybag av an elephint sez, or the mahouts sez for him, that he wants to see a friend, an' he'll not lift hand or fut till he finds him. I'm wore out wid inthrojucin' sweepers an' coolies to him, an' his hide's as full o' bay'net pricks as a musquito-net av holes, an' I'm here undher ordhers, docthor dear, to ask if any one, sick or well, or alive or dead, knows an elephint. I'm not mad,' he sez, settin' on a box av medical comforts. 'Tis my ordhers, an' 'tis my mother,' he sez, 'that would laugh at me for the father av all fools to-day. Does any wan here know an elephint?' We sick was all quiet.

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"'Now you've had your answer,' sez the docthor. 'Go away.'

"'Hould on,' I sez, thinkin' mistiways in my cot, an' I did not know my own voice. 'I'm by way av bein' acquaint wid an elephint, mesilf,' I sez.

"'That's delirium,' sez the docthor. 'See what you've done, sergeant. Lie down, man,' he sez, seein' me thryin' to get up.

"''Tis not,' I sez. 'I rode him round Cawnpore barricks. He will not ha' forgotten. I bruk his head wid a rifle.'

"'Mad as a coot,' sez the docthor, an' thin he felt my head. 'It's quare,' sez he. 'Man,' he sez, 'if you go, d'you know 'twill either kill or cure?'

"'What do I care?' sez I. 'If I'm mad, 'tis betther dead.'

"'Faith, that's sound enough,' sez the docthor. 'You've no fever on you.'

"'Come on,' sez the sergeant. 'We're all mad to-day, an' the throops are wantin' their dinner.' He put his arm round av me, an' I came into the sun, the hills an' the rocks skippin' big giddy-go-rounds. 'Seventeen years have I been in the army,' sez the sergeant, 'an' the days av mericles are not done. They'll be givin' us more pay next. Begad,' he sez, 'the brute knows you!'

"Ould Obstructionist was screamin' like all pos-

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sist whin I came up, an' I heard forty million men up the Tangi shoutin', 'He knows him!' Thin the big thrunk came round me an' I was nigh fainting wid weakness. 'Are you well, Malachi?' I sez, givin' him the name he answered to in the lines. 'Malachi, my son, are you well?' sez I, 'for I am not.' At that he thrumpeted again till the Pass rang to ut, an' the other elephints tuk it up. Thin I got a little strength back. 'Down, Malachi,' I sez, 'an' put me up, but touch me tendher, for I am not good.' He was on his knees in a minut, an' he slung me up as gentle as a girl. 'Go on now, my son,' I sez. 'You're blockin' the road.' He fetched wan more joyous toot, an' swung grand out av the head av the Tangi, his gun-gear clankin' on his back, an' at the back av him there wint the most amazin' shout I iver heard. An' thin I felt my head shpin, an' a mighty sweat bruk out on me, an' Malachi was growin' taller an' taller to me settin' on his back, an' I sez, foolish like an' weak, smilin' all round an' about, 'Take me down,' I sez, 'or I'll fall.'

"The next I remimber was lyin' in my cot again, limp as a chewed rag but cured of the fever, an' the Tangi as empty as the back av my hand. They'd all gone up to the front, an' ten days later I wint up too, havin' blocked an' unblocked an' entire army corps. What do you think av ut, Sorr?"

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"I'll wait till I see Learoyd," I repeated.

"Ah'm here," said a shadow from among the shadows. "Ah've heerd t' tale too."

"Is it true, Jock?"

"Ay; true as t'owd bitch has getten t' mange. Orth'ris, yo' maun't let t' dawgs hev owt to do wi' her."

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PRIVATE LEAROYD'S STORY

And he told a tale.—*Chronicles of Gautama Buddha.*

FAR from the haunts of Company Officers who insist upon kit-inspections, far from keen-nosed Sergeants who sniff the pipe stuffed into the bedding-roll, two miles from the tumult of the barracks, lies the Trap. It is an old dry well, shadowed by a twisted *pipal* tree and fenced with high grass. Here, in the years gone by, did Private Ortheris establish his depôt and menagerie for such possessions, dead and living, as could not safely be introduced to the barrack-room. Here were gathered Houdin pullets, and fox-terriers of undoubted pedigree and more than doubtful ownership, for Ortheris was an inveterate poacher and pre-eminent among a regiment of neat-handed dog-stealers.

Never again will the long lazy evenings return wherein Ortheris, whistling softly, moved surgeon-wise among the captives of his craft at the bottom of the well; when Learoyd sat in the niche, giving sage counsel on the management of "tykes," and Mulvaney, from the crook of the overhanging *pipal*, waved his enormous boots in benedic-

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tion above our heads, delighting us with tales of Love and War, and strange experiences of cities and men.

Ortheris — landed at last in the "little stuff bird-shop" for which your soul longed; Learoyd — back again in the smoky, stone-ribbed North, amid the clang of the Bradford looms; Mulvaney — grizzled, tender, and very wise Ulysses, sweltering on the earthwork of a Central India line — judge if I have forgotten old days in the Trap!

Orth'ris, as allus thinks he knaws more than other foaks, said she wasn't a real laady, but nob-but a Hewrasian. I don't gainsay as her culler was a bit doosky like. But she *was* a laady. Why, she rode iv a carriage, an' good 'osses, too, an' her 'air was that oiled as you could see your faice in it, an' she wore dimond rings an' a goold chain, an' silk an' satin dresses as mun 'a' cost a deal, for it isn't a cheap shop as keeps enough o' one pattern to fit a figure like hers. Her name was Mrs. DeSussa, an' t' waay I coom to be acquainted wi' her was along of our Colonel's Laady's dog Rip.

I've seen a vast o' dogs, but Rip was t' prettiest picter of a cliver fox-tarrier 'at iver I set eyes on. He could do owt you like but speeak, an t' Colonel's Laady set more store by him than if he hed been a Christian. She hed bairns of her awn, but

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they was i' England, and Rip seemed to get all t' coodlin' and pettin' as belonged to a bairn by good right.

But Rip were a bit on a rover, an' hed a habit o' breakin' out o' barricks like, and trottin' round t' plaice as if he were t' Cantonment Magistrate coom round inspectin'. The Colonel leathers him once or twice, but Rip didn't care, an' kept on gooin' his rounds, wi' his taail a-waggin' as if he were flag-signallin' to t' world at large 'at he was "gettin' on nicely, thank yo', and how's yo'sen?" An' then t' Colonel, as was noa sort of a hand wi' a dog, tees him oop. A real clipper of a dog, an' it's noa wonder yon laady, Mrs. DeSussa, should tek a fancy tiv him. Theer's one o' t' Ten Commandments says yo' maun't cuvvet your neebor's ox nor his jackass, but it doesn't say nowt about his tarrier dogs, an' happen thot's t' reason why Mrs. DeSussa cuvveted Rip, tho' she went to church reg'lar along wi' her husband, who was so mich darker 'at if he hedn't such a good coaat tiv his back yo' might ha' called him a black man and nut tell a lee nawther. They said he addled his brass i' jute, an' he'd a rare lot on it.

Well, you seen, when they teed Rip up, t' poor awd lad didn't enjoy very good 'elth. So t' Colonel's Laady sends for me as 'ad a naame for bein' knowledgeable about a dog, an' axes what's ailin' wi' him.

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"Why," says I, "he's getten t' mopes, an' what he wants is his libbaty an' coompany like t' rest on us; wal happen a rat or two 'ud liven him oop. It's low, mum," says I, "is rats, but it's t' nature of a dog; an' soa's cuttin' round an' meetin' another dog or two an' passin' t' time o' day, an' hevvin' a bit of a turn-up wi' him like a Christian."

So she says *her* dog maun't niver fight an' noa Christians iver fought.

"Then what's a soldier for?" says I; an' I explains to her t' contrairy qualities of a dog, 'at, when yo' coom to think on't, is one o' t' curusest things as is. For they larn to behave theirsens like gentlemen born, fit for t' fost o' coompany — they tell me t' Widdy herself is fond of a good dog and knaws one when she sees it as well as onny body: then on t' other hand a-tewin' round after cats an' gettin' mixed oop i' all manners o' blackguardly street-rows, an' killin' rats, an' fightin' like divils.

T' Colonel's Laady says: — "Well, Learoyd, I doan't agree wi' you, but you're right in a way o' speeakin', an' I should like yo' to tek Rip out a-walkin' wi' you sometimes; but yo' maun't let him fight, nor chase cats, nor do nowt 'orrid": an' them was her very wods.

Soa Rip an' me gooes out a-walkin' o' evenin's, he bein' a dog as did credit tiv a man, an' I catches a lot o' rats an' we hed a bit of a match on in an

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awd dry swimmin'-bath at back o' t' cantonments, an' it was none so long afore he was as bright as a button again. He hed a way o' flyin' at them big yaller pariah-dogs as if he was a harrow offan a bow, an' though his weight were nowt, he tuk 'em so suddint-like they rolled over like skittles in a halley, an' when they coot he stretched after 'em as if he were rabbit-runnin'. Saame with cats when he cud get t' cat agaate o' runnin'.

One evenin', him an' me was trespassin' ovver a compound wall after one of them mongooses 'at he'd started, an' we was busy grubbin' round a prickle-bush, an' when we looks up there was Mrs. DeSussa wi' a parasel ovver her shoulder, a-watchin' us. "Oh my!" she sings out; "there's that lovelee dog! Would he let me stroke him, Mister Soldier?"

"Ay, he would, mum," sez I, "for he's fond o' laady's coompany. Coom here, Rip, an' speeak to this kind laady." An' Rip, seein' 'at t' mongoose hed getten clean awaay, cooms up like t' gentleman he was, nivver a hauporth shy or okkord.

"Oh, you beautiful — you prettee dog!" she says, clippin' an' chantin' her speech in a way them sooart has o' their awn; "I would like a dog like you. You are so verree lovelee — so awfullee prettee," an' all thot sort o' talk, 'at a dog o' sense mebbe thinks nowt on, tho' he bides it by reason o' his breedin'.

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An' then I meks him joomp ovver my swagger-cane, an' shek hands, an' beg, an' lie dead, an' a lot o' them tricks as laadies teeaches dogs, though I doan't haud with it mysen, for it's makin' a fool o' a good dog to do such like.

An' at lung length it cooms out 'at she'd been thrawin' sheep's eyes, as t' sayin' is, at Rip for many a day. Yo' see, her childer was grown up, an' she'd nowt mich to do, an' were allus fond of a dog. Soa she axes me if I'd tek somethin' to dhrink. An' we goes into t' drawn-room wheer her 'usband was a-settin'. They meks a gurt fuss ovver t' dog, an' I has a bottle o' aale, an' he gave me a handful o' cigars.

Soa I coomed away, but t' awd lass sings out—"Oh, Mister Soldier, please coom again and bring that prettee dog."

I didn't let on to t' Colonel's Laady about Mrs. DeSussa, an' Rip he says nowt nawther; an' I gooes again, an' ivry time there was a good dhrink an' a handful o' good smooaks. An' I telled t' awd lass a heeap more about Rip than I'd ever heeard: how he tuk t' fost prize at Lunnon dog-show and cost thotty-three pounds fower shillin' from t' man as bred him; 'at his own brother was t' propputty o' t' Prince o' Wailes, an' 'at he had a pedigree as long as a Dook's. An' she lapped it all oop an' were niver tired o' admirin' him. But when t' awd lass took to givin' me money an' I

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seed 'at she were gettin' fair fond about t' dog, I began to suspicion summat. Onny body may give a soldier t' price of a pint in a friendly way an' theer's no 'arm done, but when it cooms to five rupees slipt into your hand, sly like, why, it's what t' 'lectioneerin' fellows calls bribery an' corruption. Specially when Mrs. DeSussa threwed hints how t' cold weather would soon be ovver an' she was goin' to Munsooree Pahar an' we was goin' to Rawalpindi, an' she would niver see Rip any more onless somebody she knowed on would be kind tiv her.

Soa I tells Mulvaaney an' Ortheris all t' taale thro', beginnin' to end.

"'Tis larceny that wicked ould laady manes," says t' Irishman, "'tis felony she is sejuicin' ye into, my frind Learoyd, but I'll purtect your innocince. I'll save ye from the wicked wiles av that wealthy ould woman, an' I'll go wid ye this evenin' and spake to her the wurrds av truth an' honesty. But, Jock," says he, waggin' his heead, "'twas not like ye to kape all that good dhrink an' thim fine cigars to yerself, while Orth'ris here an' me have been prowlin' round wid throats as dry as lime-kilns, and nothin' to smoke but Canteen plug. 'Twas a dhirty thrick to play on a comrade, for why should you, Learoyd, be balancin' yoursilf on the butt av a satin chair, as if Terence Mulvaney was not the aquil av anybody who thrades in jute!"

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"Let alone me," sticks in Orth'ris, "but that's like life. Them wot's really fitted to decorate society get no show, while a blunderin' Yorkshireman like you ——"

"Nay," says I, "it's none o' t' blunderin' Yorkshireman she wants; it's Rip. He's t' gentleman this journey."

Soa t' next day, Mulvaaney an' Rip an' me goes to Mrs. DeSussa's, an' t' Irishman being a strainger she wor a bit shy at fost. But yo've heeard Mulvaaney talk, an' yo' may believe as he fairly bewitched t' awd lass wal she let out 'at she wanted to tek Rip away wi' her to Munsooree Pahar. Then Mulvaaney changes his tune an' axes her solemn-like if she'd thought o' t' consequences o' gettin' two poor but honest soldiers sent t' Andamning Islands. Mrs. DeSussa began to cry, so Mulvaaney turns round oppen t' other tack and smooths her down, allowin' 'at Rip ud be a vast better off in t' Hills than down i' Bengal, and 'twas a pity he shouldn't go wheer he was so well beliked. And soa he went on, backin' an' fillin' an' workin' up t' awd lass wal she felt as if her life warn't worth nowt if she didn't hev t' dog.

Then all of a suddint he says:—"But ye *shall* have him, marm, for I've a feelin' heart, not like this could-blooded Yorkshireman; but 'twill cost ye not a penny less than three hundher rupees."

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"Don't yo' believe him, mum," says I; "t' Colonel's Laady wouldn't tek five hundred for him."

"Who said she would?" says Mulvaaney; "it's not buyin' him I mane, but for the sake o' this kind, good laady, I'll do what I never dreamt to do in my life. I'll stale him!"

"Don't say steal," says Mrs. DeSussa; "he shall have the happiest home. Dogs often get lost, you know, and then they stray, an' he likes me and I like him as I niver liked a dog yet, an' I *must* hev him. If I got him at t' last minute I could carry him off to Munsooree Pahar and nobody would niver knaw."

Now an' again Mulvaaney looked acrost at me, an' though I could mak nowt o' what he was after, I concluded to take his leead.

"Well, mum," I says, "I niver thowt to coom down to dog-steealin', but if my comrade sees how it could be done to oblige a laady like yo'sen, I'm nut t' man to hod back, tho' it's a bad business, I'm thinkin', an' three hundred rupees is a poor set-off again t' chance of them Damning Islands as Mulvaaney talks on."

"I'll mek it three-fifty," says Mrs. DeSussa; "only let me hev t' dog!"

So we let her persuade us, an' she teks Rip's measure theer an' then, an' sent to Hamilton's to order a silver collar again' t' time when he was to

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be her awn, which was to be t' day she set off for Munsooree Pahar.

"Sitha, Mulvaaney," says I, when we was outside, "you're niver goin' to let her hev Rip!"

"An' would ye disappoint a poor ould woman?" says he; "she shall have *a* Rip."

"An' wheer's he to come through?" says I.

"Learoyd, my man," he sings out, "you're a pretty man av your inches an' a good comrade, but your head is made av duff. Isn't our frind Orth'ris a Taxidermist, an' a rale artist wid his nimble white fingers? An' what's a Taxidermist but a man who can thrate shkins? Do ye mind the white dog that belongs to the Canteen Sargint, bad cess to him — he that's lost half his time an' snarlin' the rest? He shall be lost for *good* now; an' do ye mind that he's the very spit in shape an' size av the Colonel's, barrin' that his tail is an inch too long, an' he has none av the colour that divarsifies the rale Rip, an' his timper is that av his masther an' worse. But fwhat is an inch on a dog's tail? An' fwhat to a professional like Orth'ris is a few ringstraked shpots av black, brown, an' white? Nothin' at all, at all."

Then we meets Orth'ris, an' that little man, bein' sharp as a needle, seed his way through t' business in a minute. An' he went to work a-practisin' 'air-dyes the very next day, beginnin' on some white rabbits he had, an' then he drored all Rip's markin's

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on t' back of a white Commissariat bullock, so as to get his 'and in an' be sure of his colours; shadin' off brown into black as nateral as life. If Rip *bed* a fault it was too mich markin', but it was straingely reg'lar, an' Orth'ris settled himself to make a fost-rate job on it when he got haud o' t' Canteen Sar-gint's dog. Theer niver was sich a dog as thot for bad temper, an' it did nut get no better when his tail hed to be fettled an inch an' a half shorter. But they may talk o' theer Royal Academies as they like. *I* niver seed a bit o' animal-paintin' to beat t' copy as Orth'ris made of Rip's marks, wal t' picter itself was snarlin' all t' time an' tryin' to get at Rip standin' theer to be copied as good as goold.

Orth'ris allus hed as mich conceit on himsen as would lift a balloon, an' he wor so pleeased wi' his sham Rip he wor for tekking him to Mrs. DeSussa before she went away. But Mulvaaney an' me stopped thot, knowin' Orth'ris's work, though niver so cliver, was nobbut skin-deep.

An' at last Mrs. DeSussa fixed t' day for startin' to Munsooree Pahar. We was to tek Rip to t' stayshun i' a basket an' hand him ovver just when they was ready to start, an' then she'd give us t' brass — as was agreed upon.

An' my wod! It were high time she were off, for them 'air-dyes upon t' cur's back took a vast of paintin' to keep t' reet culler, tho' Orth'ris spent

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a matter o' seven rupees six annas i' t' best drooggist shops i' Calcutta.

An' t' Canteen Sargint was lookin' for 'is dog everywheer; an', wi' bein' tied up, t' beast's timper got waur nor ever.

It wor i' t' evenin' when t' train started thro' Howrah, an' we 'elped Mrs. DeSussa wi' about sixty boxes, an' then we gave her t' basket. Orth'ris, for pride of his work, axed us to let him coom along wi' us, an' he couldn't help liftin' t' lid an' showin' t' cur as he lay coiled oop.

"Oh!" says t' awd lass; "the beautee! How sweet he looks!" An' just then t' beauty snarled an' showed his teeth, so Mulvaaney shuts down t' lid and says: "Ye'll be careful, marm, whin ye tek him out. He's disaccustomed to travelling by t' railway, an' he'll be sure to want his rale mistress an' his friend Learoyd, so ye'll make allowance for his feelings at fost."

She would do all thot an' more for the dear, good Rip, and she would nut oppen t' basket till they were miles away, for fear onny body should recognise him, an' we were real good and kind soldier-men, we were, an' she honds me a bundle o' notes, an' then cooms up a few of her relations an' friends to say good-by — not more than seventy-five there wasn't — an' we cuts away.

What coom to t' three hundred and fifty rupees? Thot's what I can scarcelins tell yo', but

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we melted it—we melted it. It was share an' share alike, for Mulvaaney said: "If Learoyd got hold of Mrs. DeSussa first, sure 'twas I that remimbered the Sargint's dog just in the nick av time, an' Orth'ris was the artist av janius that made a work av art out av that ugly piece av ill-nature. Yet, by way av a thank-offerin' that I was not led into felony by that wicked ould woman, I'll send a thrifle to Father Victor for the poor people he's always beggin' for."

But me an' Orth'ris, he bein' Cockney an' I bein' pretty far north, did nut see it i' t' saame way. We'd getten t' brass, an' we meaned to keep it. An' soa we did—for a short time.

Noa, noa, we niver heeard a wod more o' t' awd lass. Our rig'mint went to Pindi, an' t' Canteen Sargint he got himself another tyke insteead o' t' one 'at got lost so reg'lar, an' was lost for good at last.

END OF PART I

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